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PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE;

OR,

THE MORAL WANTS

OF

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.

BY

MRS. ELLIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND," ETC., ETC.

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PREFACE.

THERE is no aspect of the present more hopeful for the future, than that which evinces an increasing tendency in the public mind, towards subjects connected with the prevention rather than the cure of some of our prevailing social evils.

The belief that many minds are interested in this subject, and that the subject itself is one of vast importance to the welfare of society, has been my encouragement in many efforts of a practical nature, directed to the moral improvement of the young. Having reflected deeply, too, upon the different causes which operate in the formation of character, and the paramount influence of character upon society, I have been unable to resist the conviction, that if more importance had been attached to the direction and cultivation of the moral faculties in early life, many of the social evils which we now so justly deplore, would have been either unknown, or felt in a much less disastrous manner. It has therefore been my earnest endeavor, in the following pages, to engage the sympathy of readers interested, like myself, in this important subject, in the hope that, by united co-operation, some of those improvements may be introduced into our educational systems, of which all are feeling the want, though few are yet endeavoring to supply, by the application of moral means, in such a manner as to bear directly upon the formation of moral, in connection with intellectual character.

At the same time, I am deeply sensible that the moral faculties of our nature never attain their highest excellence, except when exercised in harmony with the will of our beneficent Creator; that it is only under the influence, and by the aid of His Spirit, that they are exercised in such a manner as to be rendered subservient to the eternal well-being of the immortal soul; and that, even under this divine and efficient influence, the full perfection of which they are capable, and to which they are destined, is never attained in this present life. But while regarding this state of perfection as the end towards which the moral faculties should be supremely directed, it appears to me, that even when they fall short of this important result, they may exert an influence highly beneficial to their individual possessor, and highly advantageous in the social and public relations of life; and that, even in the absence of that spiritual influence which no human endeavors can secure, the moral faculties of our nature require, and will repay in social and individual welfare, a far larger amount of earnest attention and systematic cultivation than they have hitherto received. In the following pages, then, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I do not regard the moral influence or motives to which I refer, as synonymous with religious influence, but as strictly subordinate to it, though calculated, in their highest exercise, to harmonize with an enlightened religious faith.

ROSE HILL, *March*, 1847.

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PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL STATE OF SOCIETY.

THE progress of society during the last quarter of a century, is a subject fraught with powerful and important suggestions, to all who interest themselves in the onward movements of the human race. Opinions and events, which have entirely altered the framework of our social institutions, each assuming for itself a prominent place in public consideration, have followed each other with a celerity unknown in our past history. That relief from the excitement and exhaustion of war, which we have for thirty years enjoyed, has been highly favorable to the higher range of intellectual pursuits ; and circumstances have forced upon the public mind more practical and enlightened views, not only of the immediate requirements of society, but of the best means of promoting refinement, intelligence, and general prosperity. Thus impelled, the influence of literature, the discoveries of science, and the improvements in art, have all contributed their aid ; and, combining with a rapid increase of activity, experience, and skill, the productions of the nation have been augmented to an extent almost commensurate with the wants of the civilized world.

The almost universal diffusion of different kinds of literature, the improvements in taste, and the multiplied resources which enterprise and industry have secured, have produced a degree of general intelligence, wealth, refinement, and luxury, as conspicuous as it is unprecedented. But, on the other hand, this very advance in all that is calculated to strike the observer with an idea of national prosperity, has brought more prominently to view the ignorance and destitution which still remain, has forced more strongly upon our convictions the important fact, that, with the increase of our population, and of the means of enjoyment which the proceeds of labor have supplied, there has been also an increase of vice, degradation, and consequent misery, amongst a large portion of the community ; and a frequent and lamentable want of that individual improvement, as well as that domestic and social happiness, which might have been deemed inseparable from so much external civilization, and apparent prosperity.

These evils are now painfully felt, and their progress and consequences regarded with fearful apprehension. To counteract their influence, arrest their progress, or avert the awful calamities which they threaten, has become an important object with some of the most gifted minds, and benevolent hearts, to which society has ever been indebted for the exercise of noble effort ; and although our civil liberties have been placed on a surer foundation, our parliamentary representation, and our social institutions reformed, our penal code rendered more humane, our prison discipline improved—although our female Howards have endeavored to enlighten and to bless the victims of our violated laws, or to restore the outcasts to their family and home—although penitentiaries have been established for the reformation of the adults, and means of instruction and

improvement for the juvenile delinquents have been carefully devised—although National and British schools have been opened, new churches and chapels erected, and new colleges founded; the awful fact remains conspicuous, that crime still continues to increase. Though mechanics' institutes, reading-rooms, and literary and scientific societies are formed for the improvement of the industrious classes;—though the highest range of intellectual exercise, with the most varied and popular accomplishments, are taught in the educational establishments for the more opulent portion of the community—though every restriction is removed from the efforts of enterprise and skill, it has of late become increasingly evident, that something else is required to raise the whole tone and character of society, to secure and improve the advantages already attained, and to avert the melancholy consequences with which we are threatened.

The physical wants, and outward circumstances of society, never received a larger amount of attention from the most enlightened and philanthropic portion of the community than at the present time, and a movement has evidently been commenced in the right direction. About the exact ends to be aimed at, there is yet but little union or certainty; and about the means to be used, mankind are still more at variance. Both appear to fall lamentably short of what the case requires; but still the movement itself is a hopeful symptom of the present times. It is something, to awake, even to the painful conviction that we have slept too long. To sleep on might have been more pleasant, but the act of awaking is necessary, before lost time can be redeemed.

The great characteristic of past efforts for the benefit of society, is, that they have been almost entirely remedial and corrective—that they have been directed to the cure,

rather than the prevention, of social evils. Ignorance, improvidence, and vice have thus been allowed to go on, until the safety of the community rendered it impossible that they should any longer be tolerated. Vigorous measures have then been applied to the counteraction of their effects, rather than to the removal of their cause. Such measures, though valuable to a certain extent, have proved partial and inefficient, as regards any radical cure—too much like healing the wound on the surface, and leaving the disease to rankle within; or like removing the withered branch, while the canker-worm remains unmolested at the root of the tree.

It can scarcely be doubted that if the same amount of attention, effort, and expense bestowed upon correcting, restraining, and punishing vice, had been employed in investigating its causes, and in devising and applying means for preventing the evils deplored, society would now be experiencing far different results. To this view of the subject, public attention appears to be unceasingly devoted; and instead of deploring the mistakes of the past, it is a more profitable use to make of that deep interest which the subject is so well calculated to awaken, to turn our attention to those favorable omens already beginning to appear; and to encourage the cheering hope of far more extensive and important developments, in relation to the nature of the human mind, the motives which influence human conduct, and the causes which operate in the formation of character.

Among the cheering signs of increased attention being directed to the moral wants, and moral condition of society at large, we must not overlook some of those important movements now taking place among different orders and ranks of the community; and though perhaps engaging but little sympathy between the different agents in these

onward steps, yet all tending to establish a higher standard of moral worth, and a consequent increase of respect for every effort expressly directed to this great object.

Strongly and violently as some of these movements are often opposed, sometimes by ignorance, sometimes by prejudice, and much more frequently by that spirit which acknowledges no real good except what originates with itself; still the onward movement continues, gaining fresh numbers to its ranks, occasionally from quarters the least accredited by public approval, and fresh impetus to its force from sources to which the least expectation had been raised.

The establishment of infant schools, in which useful and moral lessons are taught at a very early age, may be regarded as one of these instances; but more especially the establishment of training schools, in which a greater advance in strictly moral education has been effected, than in any other. The progress of the temperance movement is another cheering omen, based as it is upon the strong feeling of the people, and steadily making its way against every species of opposition which can be devised. The anxiety and effort now called forth on the subject of education, and a growing conviction of the importance of providing means of instruction for all classes of the community, is one of the most striking features in the best aspect of our times. Nor must the tone and tendency of some of our popular literature be forgotten as an omen for good, rendered perhaps the more striking, by comparing with the moral influence of this class of writers fifty years ago, the noble advocacy maintained by some in the present day, of principles which lie at the root of all social union, and of all individual worth.

It is, indeed, no trifling cause for cheering expectations, that we now find among the pages of our lightest literature,

truths of deep meaning well and truly told. It is no trifling cause for hope that here we find the hideous skeleton of war stripped of his ancient glory, and laid bare in all his native hideousness; while old and long-cherished prejudices, the favorite hothouse plants of polished life, are here brought out, to show the world their feebleness, and let it see them die.

On that great subject too, the nature and the lawful use of punishment, it is a happy omen that the world has now begun to think. To what such thoughts may lead, it is impossible to calculate; but let the idea once burst upon the mind, that God alone has rightful power over the life of man, to give or take away; that vengeance is the Lord's, and his alone; that we, his erring creatures, know not how to judge save by appearances, and often execute unrighteous judgment on each other; that to forgive a guilty fellow-creature is far nobler than to be avenged; that to reclaim is nobler still: when thoughts like these rush in upon the mind, they stretch its comprehensive powers, and fill them so with charity for that great brotherhood of sinful creatures, of which we form a sinful part, that never more will such a mind return to those low views, and narrow sympathies, and harsh conclusions, which have turned the words of God himself against the lives of his frail creatures, making it a righteous retribution to cut off the guilty from amendment, and thus to destroy them and their hopes forever.

Such then are some of the bright omens of better things to come, which help to cheer us when we look around upon the moral wilderness presented by certain aspects of the world. It is a wholesome check to human pride that many of these assume a form by no means gratifying to our tastes, and operate through channels in which our sympathies have seldom flowed. One thing is wanting

on our own part, and only one, to enable us to overcome this difficulty—a strong determination to welcome that as *good*, which is really beneficial to the human race, from whatever quarter it may come, or whoever may be the individuals constituting the parties by which it is carried into effect.

Before entering fully upon the consideration of any of those preventive measures which every day is rendering it more important that we should individually, unitedly, and earnestly adopt, it may be desirable to look for a moment at some of the causes existing in our social constitution, and operating powerfully against the moral advancement of society at large. Nothing is more evident to a thoughtful observer, than that the whole energy of the English people, as a nation, is now thrown into channels connected almost exclusively with those practical operations which tend to the promotion of arts, manufactures, and physical science. Without diverting these energies from objects at once so useful, and so legitimate, it is yet highly important that the civilization of our country should be regarded in a moral, as well as a physical point of view; and here is our great defect—here is the root of those national evils which are coming to be more and more deplored. The science of morals, if such an expression may be used, is one which has hitherto been but little understood, and for that very reason it demands our earnest attention now. It is a heart-searching subject to those who look fairly and impartially into it, and for that very reason the study is one most important to individual, as well as to national good.

In this latter view of the case, however, it is possible that we may also find one of the deep-seated causes why the subject of our moral condition should have received so little consideration from the world in general, as it stands

connected with ourselves individually and practically. We are not eager to look into that, which, when fairly examined, may trouble our consciences, and condemn our daily lives. We have for the most part the sanction of society, and the example of our friends, in favor of allowing the whole matter to pass on, or, in other words, for letting such things take their natural course ; and, above all, we are, like the rest of the world, too busy to meddle in what it is quite evident that no one clearly understands. It is impossible but that this idea must sometimes flit across the mind of the thinker,—“ If such or such things are right for others, they must be right for me—if I pursue this subject further, I shall myself stand condemned.” And thus our complacency is disturbed, our long-indulged system of habit is threatened to be overturned, and we go back to our accustomed avocations, persuading ourselves that the absolute claims of the passing moment are all which demand our regard.

It is astonishing with how much complacency a respectable and closely-packed congregation will listen to a preacher descanting in general terms on the subject of Christian duty. With still greater complacency will the larger portion of the community listen to the exposition of doctrinal views, even when involving, as a thing clearly understood between the minister and his congregation, the close connection of right scriptural views, with right Christian conduct. So long as the subject of moral conduct is kept distant and general, it may be made perfectly agreeable to all ; and so long as this subject is merely glanced at as a thing too well understood to require any minute detail, or direct application to the common purposes of life, it will always be listened to without dissatisfaction. But if the same individuals should be urged to test their Christian principles on the following morning, by each

making immediate payment of their just debts, or by any other of those practical every-day duties which belong to social life, the subject would at once assume a different character, and, in all probability, the congregation of that minister would for a time become greatly diminished.

It is in reality the self-love *inherent* in our nature, which, having never been accustomed to submit to higher considerations, stands opposed to the introduction of a purer moral code than what has hitherto been found agreeable or convenient to adopt. Self-love is not pained by being told that Christians generally must be conformed to the image of Christ; but it is a widely different thing to see clearly that we must bear with patience the injurious slander of an insignificant neighbor, or that we must be willing to assist some good work in which we are not invited to take the lead, or for which no commendation will be awarded.

The self-satisfaction usually attending the occupation of a creditable position in the opinion of the world, attending also the maintenance of a character generally approved, is particularly difficult to approach with any appeals on behalf of a higher standard of moral feeling and conduct. Such individuals frequently appear to be armed with a panoply of mail, impervious to convictions touching their own fallibility; and whatever they may think or feel in secret, their outward bearing, under any attempt to reach them on this point, too clearly shows the impress of this argument—"The thing is right because *I* do it,"—not, "I do it because it is in its own nature right." With such persons the movement in favor of temperance is generally held in very low esteem; and, in all probability, they will constitute a class of society the last to welcome any measures of a strictly moral tendency, unless, indeed, their individual sanction could first be obtained by some happy method of engaging their self-complacency on the right side.

In addition to the effects produced by society in confirming long-established habits by the sanction of respectable individuals, there is, in the groundwork of English character, a kind of dogged determination to go on, whether right or wrong, if opposed in a manner which is not considered either pleasant or warrantable. The first exhibition of the temper of a boy is frequently of this description. And thus it is through all the different grades of English society. The same spirit which has fought our battles, and conquered our supposed enemies, and which has gained many a nobler but more peaceful conquest in the senate, in the lecture-hall, and in the field of free discussion—this same spirit has, in too many instances, been powerful as an enemy to moral good. Let us trust the time is not far distant when it will prove a still more powerful enemy to moral evil.

With this strong principle of self-love operating upon our own thoughts and feelings—this desire to remain undisturbed in our own habits, to build up by every means of justification in our power the line of conduct we ourselves have chosen to pursue, to resist all interference with our personal arrangements, and to show that we dare to act independently, whether others deem us right or wrong; with all this operating powerfully upon individual character, it is but natural that we should require some strong stimulus to move us collectively towards a widely different state of things,—a state involving, on the one hand, much sacrifice of self-complacency, on the other, much exercise of patience, conscientiousness, and kindly feeling.

The rapid improvements which have taken place during the last few years in our arts and manufactures, and the increased facilities we now enjoy for indulging our tastes in all the external embellishments of civilized life, as well as our love of enjoyment in all the conveniences and com-

forts which such a condition affords, have tended greatly to confirm that habitual mode of thinking which makes the actual possession of some physical good the primary object of consideration. In the present state of society we are so intent upon obtaining every thing which can promote our own personal advantage, every thing which can add to our importance by an outward exhibition of property, every thing which can give us an appearance of wealth even if the reality is not there, that any proposition for the general good, without being in some manner connected with private interest, has comparatively but little chance of obtaining attention.

“And what better shall *I* be for all that?” is a question which has proved the deathblow of many a benevolent project. But let the inquirer be made to understand, that by the carrying out of some public measure, he will in his own person be a gainer, that his property will be rendered more secure, his possessions increased in value, or his own importance and means of enjoyment enhanced in any other way, an able coadjutor may then often be found in the same man, who would not otherwise have lifted a finger to help forward the most promising scheme for general improvement.

The moral condition of mankind, when spoken of in general terms, is a subject which has little to commend it to the attention of individuals accustomed only to this kind of personal calculation. Hence, the extreme indifference with which this subject has been generally treated, in comparison with that of the intellectual and physical state of the community. There is, however, one great good arising out of the otherwise depressing aspect of the present times. It is, that as vice, and want, and misery increase, the growing evil extends itself through so many, and such varied channels, that it cannot fail in many cases to be-

come a source of personal calamity, by its opposition to the peace and the welfare of the community.

We frequently observe the working of this acute sense of personal interest, when, after expatiating with fruitless earnestness upon the importance of a high tone of feeling amongst the people at large, we speak to one class of persons of the want of strict principle amongst servants, and work-people ; and to another, of the want of consideration, kindness, or equity, on the part of masters or governors. Immediately beholding the intimate connection betwixt our general statements, and their own personal interests, the same individuals become anxious to assist in any measures that promise for themselves the benefits arising from a happier social state.

In this manner the diseases of our moral condition appear not unlikely to provide, to some extent, the means of effecting their own cure ; and while, on the one hand, we have so often to deplore the feeling whence originates the selfish inquiry, “how will this benefit me ?” on the other hand, there are so many individuals finding themselves actual losers by the present low moral tone pervading to so great extent the public mind, that it can scarcely be anticipating too much, to hope for the cordial co-operation of all such persons in whatever plans may be adopted, as most calculated to promote a higher regard for integrity, and kindly feeling, throughout all classes of society.

In the formation of plans having this end for their object, we must be careful not to look too low—not to attempt to work upon the poor alone, without approaching the rich ; nor to indulge in the vain dream of making experiments upon others, to the neglect of ourselves. There are distinct duties attaching to different individuals, and to different classes of society ; but there is no moral code which is not applicable to all ; and when we speak of the

paramount importance of strict integrity in a servant, we do society great injustice if we fail to enforce the same virtue upon masters, and upon all whose higher position gives them more extended influence.

A disposition to enforce upon others what we choose to escape from ourselves, and to allow in ourselves what we know to be not strictly right, is an evil which operates with fatal effect against our individual, as well as our social interests. It is an evil of wide-spreading influence, as destructive to the beauty of moral character in general, as to the vitality of Christian life. It is possible there may be no actual vice in cases where this evil exists, but merely an allowed deviation from what is known and felt to be right, just because others do the same, or because it might injure our worldly interests to act differently. The deadening influence of this accustomed habit has now spread so widely over society, that the faculty of distinguishing right from wrong appears something to be paralyzed and useless; and when we talk of what is right, we often speak so widely from our own practice, yet with such few and feeble symptoms of self-condemnation, that the words of our lips, as opposed to the language of our lives, fail to convey any definite or certain meaning.

The remedy for this disease would indeed appear to be nothing less than the creation of a new principle of life within the human heart, for which we know that Spirit alone is sufficient by whose creative power man first became a living soul. It would seem, too, that little could be hoped except from a better direction being given in early youth to the exercise of the different faculties of the human mind. And are we then to direct our efforts *only* to the nursery and the schoolroom? Can nothing be effected *individually* by an earnest and a prayerful examina-

tion of ourselves, and of our own actions as they stand approved or condemned in the sight of God ?

When we reflect upon what has been accomplished by union of effort in many a noble cause, and especially what recent times have witnessed, in the power of the people, firmly, yet peaceably, as with the spirit of one man, to maintain what was supposed to be the people's rights, we can scarcely believe that the same united energy directed to the attainment of a higher good, would fail to accomplish the great object so much needed in the present day—an entire reformation of our moral condition as relates to the intercourse of social life, the principles upon which trade and commerce are conducted, the education which we provide for the rising generation, and the views of practical and relative duty which as individuals we entertain.

For the real prosperity of our country, for our progress in all the virtues, as well as the refinements of civilized life, nothing is now so much needed as this union of effort. We have every thing else that we can desire—a nation rich in produce, abundant in resources, and teeming with people all prepared to think and act. What a garden of beauty might such a country become, instead of being to so great an extent a moral wilderness, in which the flowers are so closely interwoven with the weeds, that their bloom is diminished, and their perfume unperceived !

The world in which we now live, the state of society by which we are surrounded, appears to be peculiarly prepared for the exercise of new and beneficial efforts towards the attainment of physical and intellectual good. And why not also of moral good ? The present is, indeed, a time remarkable for the giving way of cherished prejudices—the wearing out of old distinctions—the disruption of former combinations—and the union of things long deemed

incompatible. Perhaps the differences, and the separations, constitute at present a more conspicuous feature in the aspect of society, than its union, or its general harmony; but if while the parties so strongly bound together by name as well as interest, lose, so often as is now the case, their individual identity with what they hold by; and if, while the surface remains compact and apparently unbroken by which so many of the different classes of society are distinguished, and held together, the opinions and the feelings underneath are ebbing out and finding for themselves wide and different channels, and thus leaving hollowness and insecurity beneath an outward form;—while this is the case with many old-established orders of society, we cannot help believing that the time has come for greater union in things which are essential to the well-being of mankind in general.

But beyond all other favorable indications of the present times, stands forth pre-eminently this important fact—that men, and women too, are beginning to be more in earnest about the great realities of life. Triflers, both active and inactive, unquestionably we have yet, in sufficient numbers, and to spare; but among such, our earnest workers are rendered more conspicuous by the contrast; and these now constitute a phalanx so commanding in their power and their resources, that even the most desponding mind is brought to hope in the success of any measure which they set themselves unitedly to carry out.

We have now these earnest workers in every department of human effort, connected with our physical and intellectual prosperity as a nation. We have them of all denominations, parties, schools, and sects. In proportion to their faith in the magnitude of the object they believe themselves called upon to accomplish, they are contented to merge these differences, and to act with the force of

multitudes as if actuated by one mind. They have but recently done this, and done it nobly, for the attainment of a great physical advantage, well knowing that such is impossible to be effected without its accompaniment of moral good. Is it then too much to expect of our earnest workers, that they will give the same amount of energy to a yet nobler, and more important cause?—that they will merge the differences of sect and party, for the purpose of effecting a more lasting and universal good?—in short, that they will join hand and heart in the great, the noble, but the long-neglected work, of raising the moral character of the English people, at least to a level with their intellectual greatness?

CHAPTER II.

STANDARDS OF MORAL EXCELLENCE.

It is quite possible that in the busy world in which we live, there are many intelligent, as well as philanthropic individuals, who have never seriously brought their minds to examine the decided features by which a high and a low state of moral character is distinguished; and who are consequently unacquainted with the immense importance of these characteristics in the aggregate, as regards the well-being of a community or a nation.

Every one understands perfectly well what is meant by crime, and the great advantage which must accrue to a community or a nation where crime is prevented from existing. Every one understands, too, what is meant by a viciously-disposed person—a thief, a drunkard, or a ruf-

fian ; and every one is aware of the importance of restraining them as much as possible from the indulgence of their vicious propensities, and preserving society from the outrages they might be disposed to commit. The real injury done by individuals of this description, is, however, comparatively small, to the evil which diffuses itself like a deleterious atmosphere amongst all ranks and classes of society, wherever there exists a generally low state of moral feeling, where principle is habitually made to give place to expediency, and where the question most uniformly asked, is—"how far will this serve my purposes?"—rather than "how far is it consistent with the moral law of a just and holy God?"

A high or a low tone of moral feeling, as either may pervade the sentiments, or influence the actions of a community, is not easy to describe in the minute details of its operation ; because both high and low motives are so linked in with sentiments of their own nature, each producing similar impressions upon the minds and characters with which they are brought in contact, that scarcely can a high and ennobling emotion be produced in one individual mind, but it thrills through an innumerable multitude of channels of feeling, reaching distant hearts ; and, even in opposite quarters of the world, sometimes stirring up answering emotions like echoes, carrying on the musical intelligence of mind with mind, and creating ever-widening circles of emotion over the surface of the great ocean of human life, even to the shores of eternity itself.

On the other hand, there is no selfish, sordid, or grovelling motive, which is not calculated to call forth its like. A mean or ungenerous action naturally produces a similar return. An act of dishonesty, however slight, or however cloaked by plausible excuses, gives a sanction to other acts of the same nature, and often to a far greater and more

culpable extent, than was ever contemplated, as the consequences of his own want of high principle, by him who set the first bad example. An act of deception is equally fatal and far-extending in its results ; and each, and all, disseminate their own poison through society, in degrees proportioned to the influence of the individual with whom they originate, whether that influence flows from rank, property, religious station, or personal popularity.

It would seem, from observation of human character in its different stages of development, and also from the evidence of history, as if a high state of civilization, as relates to arts and manufactures, even when accompanied by the cultivation of physical science, of literature, and of general knowledge, was not the most favorable to the exercise of pure and lofty sentiments. It would seem as if those sterner, ruder states of society, when the promotion of public good, the maintenance of peace, or the protection of property against the assaults of some common enemy, demanded of every man the exercise of his noblest energies, were times in which the most striking instances of true generosity, integrity, and self-devotedness for the good of others, have generally occurred ; and although it may be argued, that the record of such instances being preserved is no evidence of their frequency, it must at least be accepted as a proof how justly such instances were valued by the people among whom they were called forth. In a highly civilized state of society, such as that in which we now live, it is not pretended that such instances do not occur ; but, that they are not valued as they ought to be, is a lamentable fact. They are, in truth, lost sight of among our busy and conflicting interests, the motives by which they are dictated confused and mixed up in public opinion with others of a far inferior order, and even compared, at a great disadvantage, with such as ensure some physical

or material benefit to the individuals who pronounce upon their value, and whose judgment does not stand alone, but necessarily passes as a law with others.

The man of high principle and noble sentiments, who lives in a state of society in which the moral standard is low, necessarily stands alone. He is not, and he cannot be, understood by those around him, who, failing to recognise in his actions the same motives and aims which influence their own, are so entirely at a loss, as not unfrequently to suspect him of being a deceiver—an impostor, whose true character, in all its odiousness, is sure, at some time or other, to be brought to light. Thus by too many he is suspected of some sinister design; but, unable to lay hold of actual proof that such is really the case, they find in the general tenor of his life so deep, though still a silent, censure upon their own, that after first suspecting, they come in time to hate him; and thus the man of purest motives, in a world by which such motives are not estimated at their true worth, makes in reality more enemies, than the man who acts upon the well-known principle of making himself and his own worldly interests objects of primary consideration in every thing he does.

A man of this latter class, actuated by pure selfishness, by the love of money, or the hope of attaining rank or property, if successful in the pursuit of these, the objects of his highest ambition, passes easily on among his fellow-men. All, indeed, make way for him—all recognise the principles upon which he acts—all understand him; and looking upon his prosperity and his exaltation as favorable omens of their own, seeing that both are based upon the same foundation, they delight to do honor to such a man, and, in some instances, even exalt him as a hero.

A state of society in which the moral standard is low, though characterized chiefly by meanness, selfishness, and

disregard of justice and of truth, can never exist long without the exhibition of great crimes, because there will always be impassioned, daring, and restless spirits, ready to burst forth into violence of any, and almost of every kind, if unrestrained by moral law, and by the influence of a correct estimate of good and evil pervading the public mind. The greatest criminals have seldom intended to be such in the commencement of their career. Crime itself, indeed, is modified by every possible degree between a passive surrender of the will under the power of strong temptation, and a malignant or desperate design carried out into a monstrous or a fatal deed.

Whatever may be the melancholy issue, the beginning of such a career has, unquestionably, been a false estimate of right and wrong, a low moral code, a want of love for the true, the pure, and the good, of admiration for the just and the upright, a leaning habitually to selfish and passionate indulgence, a pre-eminent desire to gratify the inclinations of the present moment, and thus to leave the future to care for itself. Such has no doubt been the early state of most, if not all of those unfortunate criminals, who have closed a career of vice by an ignominious death; and though happily there are comparatively few whose ungoverned passions drive them to this appalling excess, yet such, there is every reason to fear, is the moral condition at the present time of a vast portion of the multitudes who throng our crowded streets, and people the fertile hills and smiling valleys of our boasted land.

In a state of society where the moral standard is generally low, there is every thing to fear—no real security for property, character, or rights—no bond of union which may not be severed in a moment by some new or opposing interest. Like a smothered fire which is liable to burst forth in flames at any outlet, the selfish propensities

and gross passions of human nature in such a state are ever at work beneath the surface, waiting only their opportunity for more active operation. The wisest laws, even when most strictly enforced, can do little for such a community. Those who have no conscience as to right and wrong, and those who have learned to disregard the voice of conscience altogether, are sure to evade, or to endeavor to evade, the restraints of law, and to make light of its severest punishments. The arm of power does little for such a people. The very cowardice which makes them cringe, and tremble, and flatter, and deceive, under such a rule, is but a part of that moral meanness which prevents their daring to do right. And the worst feature of their case is this—that the lower they sink in moral degradation, the less they are capable of estimating their disgrace, or feeling to what a depth they have fallen; and consequently the less hope there is of any combined, consistent, or systematic effort being made, to rise to a higher grade in the scale of moral worth.

We are told that it is impossible for this state of things to exist where knowledge is diffused amongst the people, and especially where the arts, and sciences, the conveniences, and the embellishments of civilized life are understood and valued. England, according to such a mode of reasoning, ought by this time scarcely to require the protection of a police, her prisons ought to be untenanted, her lanes and streets, her halls and cottages, her public places, and her private haunts, unvisited by vice. Although it is still to be acknowledged with regret, that a large portion of her population remain without the means of education; yet those means have operated so long and so forcibly upon the other and more favored portion, that each individual ought to be a pattern in himself of all that is benevolent, honorable, just, and true, the highest taught in our schools

and colleges being, of course, the most perfect specimens of *pure morality*.

We are too much in the habit of complaining of the want of moral principle, amongst the classes of society regarded as below our own, without considering that the moral standard of one class of society is always the reflection of that which is adopted by the class above it; that influence invariably works downwards, the greater giving the bias and the tone to the less; and that so surely as good faith is violated by those who fill exalted stations, so surely as the love of money is made the ruling motive of action, and justice and generosity and truth are disregarded by the affluent portion of society, as surely will the same evils be found to prevail amongst the poorer classes, though probably exhibiting themselves in a widely different manner. It is true that individual cases may occur where this rule does not hold good, that masters of unimpeachable integrity will sometimes have to suffer from dishonest servants, and that the opposite of this case will also occasionally occur. These separate instances, however, do nothing to disprove the fact as it regards the *general* tone of feeling and of principle in different classes of the community; and, therefore, when we complain of want of principle amongst the poor, and when we would prescribe for them a stricter moral law than that which they are accustomed to observe, we must not forget to make a similar application of our good advice to those individuals by whom the poor are so powerfully influenced, and whose example it is generally their ambition to imitate.

From whatever source the habits of the working classes in our country are derived, it must be generally acknowledged that the standard of their moral principles is at present lamentably low. No one can have much to do

with the affairs of the poor, as they are now conducted, without having deeply to regret, that where they have their own personal interests at stake, the love of truth goes but a very little way with them in what they say or do. No one can have tried, for any length of time, to help the poor, without having deeply to regret the little disposition they evince to help themselves. No one can have made great sacrifices to serve the poor, without having deeply to regret their want of gratitude, or their selfish appropriation of every offered good as if it was a right to which they were entitled to lay claim.

I speak not of these things as judging harshly of the poor. For every subterfuge and evasion, for every hard feeling they evince, and every act arising from defective principle, which they commit, they have an excuse in their ignorance and poverty, which constitute a claim so powerful upon our pity and forgiveness, that we who know nothing of the strong incentive of sheer want, ought at least to deal gently with them, how much soever our patience and our forbearance may be tried. Above all, we ought to remember that the root of any moral evil dwells not with them, that their humble lives are morally the transcript of the lives of those above them; and though their characters may perhaps be more strong in every feature, more coarse, or more repulsive, that they are not, for that reason, really worse, or more to be condemned.

A state of society in which the moral standard is generally high, possesses advantages which are perhaps more deeply felt, than easily explained. Such a state of society has no more distinctive characteristic than its security—its safety—the perfect confidence and trust by which the members of such a community are bound together. Nor is this all. Wherever the moral standard is

high, each individual is a wholesome check upon another—a help—a stay—a support, in all things good. It is not easy to do wrong beneath the glance of a noble eye, unaccustomed to look favorably upon meanness or deception. It is not easy to make self the chief object of consideration, when intimately associated with generous and devoted beings, who live for others rather than themselves. It is not easy to be passionate and vindictive with the guileless, the trusting, and the pure in heart. It is not easy to be mean in the presence of the truly great. It is not easy to be malignant or cruel in the presence of the truly kind. How then shall we estimate, at its true value, a state of general feeling which renders it painful and difficult to do wrong? Yet such would unquestionably be the case, if the standard of morality universally acknowledged amongst us were sufficiently high.

Such a state of feeling would *necessarily* be accompanied by a high degree of general intelligence; because that very love of the just, the true, and the beautiful—that thirst after perfection in all things which belongs to an elevated tone of moral character, always stimulates the spirit of investigation, and leads both to the pursuit of knowledge, and the cultivation of art, as steps towards higher excellence, and especially as means of doing good; besides which, to the individual whose mind is thoroughly imbued with a sense of moral responsibility, every act becomes more or less a duty, and, in most instances, a duty so closely connected with the happiness and the welfare of others, that every means by which that happiness and welfare can be promoted and ensured, is sought out and laid hold of with an earnestness which is of itself an enjoyment of so exquisite a nature, that having once tasted it, all merely selfish gratifications sink into nothing by comparison.

We have been told in past times, that here lies the danger of direct moral cultivation ; that so much good is promised, and so much effected too, as to lead those by whom, and upon whom it operates, to rest satisfied, without caring for the realities of a world to come ; that it renders them, in fact, regardless of religion, and unsolicitous about their own condition in the sight of God. I cannot, however, believe, that a mind thus influenced, and brought, as already described, into close and tender sympathy with kindred minds, can rest satisfied, either for itself or others, with wishes or attainments necessarily terminating with the transient pursuits of the present life. So far from this, its course is onward—upward—ever. It has no resting-place on earth, where every thing it pants for is but dimly seen, or imperfectly secured. Earth holds, in fact, no home for such a mind. Life, to such a mind, can be nothing but a journey—a busy, a laborious, but often a beautiful journey ; and of all the travellers upon this journey who might wish to linger by the way, to grovel in the dust of its low paths, or even to revel among its fair but perishing flowers—of all the travellers who would sit down listless and weary, deaf to the invitations that might cheer them on, and blind to the kindly beckoning hand that might point them to the speedy close of their pilgrimage ; those who have learned the real value of benevolence, justice, tenderness, and truth, and have seen and felt their rarity among the busy avocations of man's daily life, would, I believe, be the last—all other things being equal—the *very* last, to neglect that highest knowledge through which the blessed tidings of a life to come are made intelligible to all.

I cannot here withhold a few remarks upon the subject of a low moral standard, when connected with a profession of religion. It may seem almost paradoxical to speak of

sincerity in such a profession, when unaccompanied with a strict observance of the moral law, even in things of apparently trifling moment in themselves. Such, however, is known sometimes to be the case, not only with individuals, but, perhaps more frequently, with classes of society; and where it is so, human life presents no fact more melancholy, or more fearful in its consequences. I speak, of course, without reference to any thing so dark as vice, so guilty as crime; my remarks have reference rather to the prevailing tone of feeling, as regards respect or disrespect for moral principle when practically exhibited, strictness or laxity in the transaction of merely secular affairs, evasions practised, and deceptions yielded to, for the purpose of maintaining some advantageous position or opinion, the fear of displeasing made a more important object than the love of truth, envyings, backbitings, indulged in; and, in short, a place allowed amongst the thoughts, the feelings, and the actions, of daily life, for all those low and selfish motives, which, if they never lead to actual crime, prevent, effectually, the growth of Christian character, hinder the usefulness of many a zealous and otherwise devoted professor, and throw a shadow over that religion which it ought to be the Christian's constant aim to exhibit in all its purity before the world.

In a state of religious society, where a high moral standard is consistently upheld, a single individual, negligent or indifferent on these points, appears so fearfully defective in his character, that none can bear the stigma which his profession casts upon the cause of Christ; and friendly advice, and warning, and discipline, are brought to bear unsparingly upon the case, as it stands out obvious to public censure. But if amongst the same society, the moral standard is permitted to fall generally low, then one professor keeps another in countenance, by fellowship in faults

allowed, and in small defects which pass for common and inevitable weaknesses ; and thus, "poor human nature" is just pitied, and the thing goes on, blending with other things of a like nature, until the web of evil grows too complicated for any single hand to attempt to tear away ; and those who shrink into this pitiful and downward-tending state, draw closer over them the sheltering cloak of outward profession, in the vain hope of hiding the deadness and the emptiness beneath.

The absence of a due regard to moral principle in the transactions of daily life, is no proof that moral feeling is extinct. It may exist in all its vigor, and yet be so perverted, in its exercise, from those channels through which it was intended, by an all-wise Creator, that it should flow for the benefit of his creatures, as scarcely to answer any of the purposes for which this important portion of our nature was originally designed.

An individual wholly absorbed in self—at least, so far as relates to any thing practical—wholly supine, and indifferent to the claims of justice and humanity, as connected with the actual affairs of real life, may yet be so occupied with the pages of a stirring fiction as to be melted to the tenderest pity, or roused to the warmest indignation at the oppression and the wrong which an ingenious author has described. Indeed, it seems not improbable that much of the moral feeling which lies dormant during the ordinary routine of each busy day, as life is now for the most part spent, finds outlet and exercise in this manner, and so relieves the weariness and the want which is necessarily felt, wherever the strain of long-continued effort falls upon one set of faculties alone, without the others being called into any degree of action. What, for instance, would be the fate of a novel, however cleverly written, which should describe the exercise, the success, or the defeat, of merely

intellectual power; in which the characters should be talented machines, uninfluenced by sentiments of any kind, and engaged in actions neither good nor bad? If such a thing were possible to be accomplished without any single touch of moral interest, would the book draw forth the young clerk from his dull office a single moment earlier than his accustomed time? Would it occupy the tired mechanic, wending home from work, and jostling against a hundred angry passengers, as he goes heedlessly along, deep buried in the page, which tells a history like his own, of loves, and friendships, and keen sensibilities, which the world has never known, nor cared to know, and which, for that very reason, surprise him the more, to find them faithfully depicted there? Would such a novel draw together tearful listeners, trembling lest the slightest stir or movement should interrupt a single word of one whose moral being is tried and tested to its utmost nerve by the hot furnace of temptation, and yet may conquer, or perhaps may fail—they know not which? Oh, no! it is the *moral*, whether right or wrong, which gives to fiction its strong charm. It is the great conflict betwixt good and evil—or, at least, betwixt that which appears such—the agonizing dread lest what we hate as evil should obtain the mastery—the gradual unwinding of the labyrinthine clue by which the good at last is brought to light, the truth established, and the beautiful conclusion drawn, of justice done to all, according to their separate deserts. It is all this, connected with a flowing style, and pleasant pictures, placed before the imagination, just so as to keep other faculties, besides the moral, in an easy kind of play, which constitutes, to many minds, a combination almost irresistible, and beguiles no trifling number of their weary cares.

It is too much the custom of the present time—perhaps of all times—to make light of any good or any evil, the

exact amount of which it is impossible to calculate by numbers, or to estimate by weight and substance. And yet, all the strong principles of our nature—all the motives, sentiments, emotions which constitute the reality of what we are, lie deep, and are comparatively unseen and incommunicable; much less are they capable of being summed up in figures, and entered among other items of property, or loss, or gain.

We cannot tell exactly what is glory, nor mete it out by computation; and yet, what influence has ever exercised a stronger power upon the actions and the minds of men? Common as it is, and familiar in all its most minute and delicate manifestations, we cannot calculate the amount or value of a mother's love—of any love, indeed; and yet we know that *love is strong as death*. We cannot even calculate our own, nor our individual capability of hoping, striving, suffering, or enduring. We cannot say exactly what degree of penitence brings back the prodigal, nor set a price upon the yearnings of the father's heart, when first he sees his son *while yet a great way off*. We cannot number the sad tears of the repentant sinner; and if we could, how many feelings are there in his wounded heart too deep for tears to tell! We cannot say what constitutes the virtue of forgiveness, nor yet what makes the gentle attribute of mercy so all-commanding in its power. We cannot reckon up the items of that sympathy which binds the human family together, nor tell what makes the friendships of our early youth the solace of our weary age. We cannot give an estimate of how much trial we have borne, or state the power of the temptations we have been strengthened to withstand, or what measure of resistance we may yet be able to command. We know not even at what crisis, or what extremity, the Almighty arm will be stretched forth to save us. We see, perhaps, no means of outward

help, and, judging only from things seen and temporal, we should say, that *all things were against us* ; and yet our faith is not the less, and we bear on, believing, trusting, knowing, that our punishment is meted out by one who understands the exact proportion of our need, and would not lay his chastisements upon us except in mercy and in love.

All these, the hidden, but yet true foundations of human character and conduct, unseen, except by the all-searching eye of God himself, are utterly impossible to be either fully known, or duly calculated ; and yet they are, to our existence in this state of being, what the nerves are to the body—the medium of motion and sensation. Shut out from human life the exercise of all its deep emotions, sever these nerves, or paralyze them in their operation, what do we become ? Mere puppets on life's stage, moved only by the physical realities of every passing hour—parts of life's great machinery, each acting only as an item of a whole, without the individuality of separate and responsible existence, because without any distinct moral being.

In order to form some idea of the actual power which belongs to the moral portion of our nature, we have only to observe the strong emotions sometimes produced, and conveyed, like electric sparks, from one to another among a multitude of people ; and that, too, in cases where few, if any, have individual interests at stake. Individual sympathies they must have, with the cause in general ; but not perhaps those personal interests for which alone men seem to live, except when under strong excitement of some rare and overpowering nature, connected with the general good, or possibly involving principles more dear than life itself. There is among a multitude of minds, when thus awakened, an all-pervading sense of right connected with the exercise of justice, and benevolence, as shown in the meas-

uring out to every one their due, in the protection of the weak from the oppression of the strong, and even in a lenient mercy exercised in offering pardon, rather than inflicting punishment. Say what men will about the selfishness, the apathy, the degradation of all human beings, there is a thrilling sense of right accompanying thoughts like these—a cord of sympathy connecting mind with mind, which, let an able speaker or a powerful actor touch judiciously, and what emotion of a merely selfish nature could be made to stir so forcibly a multitude of people, as if actuated by one spirit, and instinct with one life ?

Let us not then withhold our faith entirely from these strong impulses—let us not resign all hope of a great moral reformation yet to be effected in the human family. As reasoning creatures, we have this strong ground to build upon,—that all evil, whether in purpose, passion, or action, is in itself of a dissevering and destructive nature ; that it can only make its way to public approbation, and obtain the applause of multitudes, by assuming to be *good* in one form or another, and thus perverting judgment, and misleading ignorance ; while, on the other hand, all good has in its very nature a tendency to draw together—to unite—to harmonize—to improve—to strengthen—to edify ; and that men of pure and upright motives delight to look each other in the face as members of a noble brotherhood, and thus to wish “ God speed,” one to another, as earnest travellers bound upon a journey that must lead them to the selfsame end.

Were these considerations sufficiently impressed upon the minds of people generally, and were each of us solicitous to do our part, what might we not expect as the happy consequences of the moral standard being raised among us ? The same amount of power, of industry, of energy, now busily at work in cultivating art, in stimulating com-

merce, and in extending national resources, (without withdrawing any portion of its influence from such legitimate and wholesome channels,) if once directed to the cause of moral reformation, and directed as it would be upon a people highly capable of good impressions, might not only prevent the fruitless waste of noble effort, now expended upon corrective measures, but effect an incalculable amount of individual, and of public good.

It is difficult, as it would be painful, to believe that such endeavors are not on the eve of being systematically made. The great question is, through what channels shall that philanthropy be led to flow more usefully, which is already so benevolently at work, inventing correctives for every evil, cures for every disease, restraints for every wrong propensity, and punishments for every crime. The good feeling, the earnest endeavor, the zeal, the perseverance, are not wanting. We see and feel their presence everywhere; in the cottage of the poor, by the bedside of the dying, and in the prison-cell of the condemned. Wherever the case is difficult or desperate, we find this benevolence at work. At the end of a long career of vice, we find it pouring solemn truths into the ear by which they seldom, if ever, have been heard before. When the brand is on the forehead, and the iron in the heart, we find it patiently endeavoring to sooth, to comfort, and to save. When the cry of hunger is abroad, we find it busily collecting means to provide the famishing with bread.

All this is not only commendable, but, in the present state of things, *imperative*, upon the Christian, and the philanthropist. The question yet remains, whether one-half of this benevolence and generous effort judiciously bestowed upon the early part of human life, might not have prevented the other half being needed at its close—whether the same amount of zeal directed to a desperate case,

might not have been more wisely applied while the case was still hopeful—whether the solemn truths so difficult sometimes to make intelligible, after vicious habits long indulged have hardened and stupified the mind, might not have been more profitably told, while that mind was comparatively innocent, and open to impression—whether the voice of kindness listened to with scorn when only heard too late, might not, in early youth, have kept the wanderer from the path of ruin, and thus preserved his heart from anguish, and his brow from shame—whether the deep sympathy and generous ardor now so laudably employed in providing bread, might not have prevented half the want it feeds, by teaching others how to multiply their own resources, and how to economize their means in times of plenty; as well as by instilling at the same time a nobler spirit of independence, and teaching them how to be, through life, active and able providers for themselves.

CHAPTER III.

UNIVERSAL ACTIVITY.

IN order more fully to understand our present social position, as a people far advanced in civilization, and in general intelligence, it is necessary to take into consideration some of the principal causes of that blindness, or rather deadness, to moral responsibility, which characterizes the present state of society, through all ranks and all classes. If, among the first and most powerful of these causes, I speak of a *working world*, it is not that I am weak enough to regret such being the condition of things in which we are at present involved. Still less would I

cherish the visionary idea, that by retiring into solitary caves, and living in constant meditation, even upon high and holy things, mankind would be acting out the purposes for which they were sent into the world. A state of active and useful exercise is now universally believed to be the happiest state, even for the individual actor. To a working world, in order to ensure its individual and social welfare, I would only attach this one condition, that it must work *morally*, as well as physically and intellectually.

The world we live in, then, is to be regarded especially as a working world ; and he who should teach or advise for it under any other character, would evince a want of judgment in the application of appropriate means to produce the results desired. In a working world it is necessary that every thing should harmonize with the general state of its affairs ; and thus he who should stand still, or remain inactive in such a world, would suffer the penalty of being left behind and forgotten. While we live in this world, we must work like the rest. In what *way* to work, is the question of highest importance to the great business of life.

But in what way are those around us working ? for that also, is a question of vast importance. A working world, provided labor is well directed, well timed, and well paid, must be a happy world ; since man is so constituted that rest brings him no enjoyment, except when it alternates with labor. Work, therefore, considered under its general aspect, is not only a necessity of our nature ; but, as it operates in civilized communities, it is the appointed means of procuring for us both what we need, and what we desire. Our need, in the first place, directs to the kind of labor most productive in supplying our immediate wants ; and when our wants are satisfied, our desires still give the tone to our occupations, while these, in their turn, influence our

social intercourse, and give a bias to individual character.

After all, then, our desires come to be main-springs of activity. Rising above a state of mere physical necessity, we learn to desire rather what we admire, than what we absolutely want ; and thus individual, as well as national character, is formed according to the standard of what is most generally admired.

A working world like ours, intent upon its inventions, arts, manufactures, and commerce, has almost necessarily a tendency to exalt the standard of material excellence above every other—if not avowedly so, at least in practice. Hence, the excellence we aim at in the present day is essentially a material excellence. The best tools, and the best workmen, in whatever craft employed, are, as regards the one, objects of the highest attainment—as regards the other, subjects of the richest rewards we have to offer ; and, unquestionably, to a certain extent, this is as it ought to be. So far as tools are concerned, a standard of material excellence is all that can be desired ; and, so far as we obtain bread by our manufactures, our best hands are our best men.

How far the transactions of men of business are conducted with reference to the moral law ; how far they make the necessity of living a plea for customary deviation from strict honesty and truth ; to what extent they shelter themselves under the authority of respectable and even professedly-religious men, who have done the same, would perhaps, in the present instance, be scarcely prudent to attempt to say. It is impossible, however, at all times, to lull the suspicion, that in the choice of objects to be aimed at, and means to be adopted, the whole world of business has practically but one standard of excellence—that of actual tangible profit ; it has, in fact, no time to think of any other. Each member of the working community is

hurrying on with his or her given occupation, working against time—working in the spirit and fear of competition, and with the desperate struggle of those who fight with mortal enemies, well knowing, that to yield in the contest is to sink, and to be trampled down by the onward pressure of a hurrying host.

An instance of no uncommon occurrence, so far as relates to the particular state of feeling exemplified, will sufficiently illustrate what is here attempted to be described. A benevolent gentleman, whose business, as well as pleasure, leads him to the constant amelioration of human suffering, gave his attention, some time ago, to the situation of the needle-makers in one of our manufacturing towns, with a view to remedying, if possible, the deleterious effects upon the lungs which this occupation is well known to produce. It was not long before this gentleman saw clearly that, by a particular contrivance, the sharp steel dust might be prevented from assailing the lungs, and, with peculiar pleasure, he communicated his discovery to some of the masters concerned in this business. A feeling of slight surprise, that he should trouble himself at all about the matter, was all he met with in return. The masters had no wish to adopt his invention, because, as they told him, they “found no difficulty in obtaining *hands*” for their work. The many suffering bodies to which those hands were attached, and the premature and agonizing deaths by which even the hands themselves were arrested in their labor, appeared to make little impression upon them, so long as other *hands* were immediately ready to take up the tools which had been dropped.

This circumstance, among many others of a similar nature, which might be brought forward, is not dwelt upon with any idea of proving that these master needle-makers were men deficient in kindly feeling. In their own fami-

lies, and in cases where it had occurred to them to think and feel kindly, they may possibly have maintained characters the very opposite of cruel or oppressive. With them it was, in all probability, the great pressure of an incessant working system—the need they each had to make as many needles as their neighbors, or to be outdone in the market, which habitually filled their minds, and occupied their thoughts, to the total exclusion of all other considerations.

The tendency of this extreme pressure is necessarily to habituate the mind to expend all its energies upon objects of practical utility in the material world ; in fact, to exalt the material rather than the spiritual ; and, in the higher range of human effort, the intellectual rather than the moral. Indeed, men now work upon matter, and obtain bread by their work, in many cases, with so much difficulty, and by such incessant application, that they seem to have neither time nor inclination to inquire whether, in reality, there be such a thing as spirit or not. Or, in other cases, men work upon matter, and grow rich by their work, until, finding that riches procure them comforts, pleasures, honors, titles, they come, in time, to regard the whole world as interesting, and worthy of their attention, only just so far as it is material. They work upon matter—they spend upon it the strength of their sinews, and the sweat of their brows—they institute profound researches into its nature and properties—they bestow their wealth upon it, in the hope of a tenfold return—they fight for it, live for it, die for it ! Can we then wonder that there should exist a prevailing tendency practically to recognise in material excellence our chief, if not our only good ?

In the midst of all this we have a busy working benevolence ; and never, perhaps, in the whole history of the human race, was there more time, more money, or more

disinterested effort devoted to benevolent purposes than now. We have Christian philanthropists—all success to their endeavors, all honor to their names!—who help to keep alive a conviction, that there is something in our nature, in the relation between man and man, and especially between the spirit of man and his Creator, more real, more enduring, and even more necessary to be contemplated, than any thing discovered in the stirring events which a material demand and a material supply have ever produced.

But, in keeping with the times in which we live, even these philanthropists, in their zealous advocacy of one particular cause, or, in other words, in their earnestness to obtain the necessary means of sustaining one particular line of operations, are apt to echo, perhaps a little too loudly, the plaudits of that eloquence which brings the largest amount of current coin into their treasury. Thus we acquire a tendency to believe there can be no higher kind of merit upon earth, than that of the lady who drops her gold ear-rings into the collector's plate; and we arrive at this conclusion, just because the weight and the cost of these ornaments—the gold of which they are composed—can be seen, handled, and computed, with the minutest exactness.

In order to see this more clearly, let us look at an opposite case. Perhaps in some one of those obscure lanes or alleys into which the collectors of contributions have penetrated, there lives a poor female slave of the needle, with whom it has been a sacred duty *not* to give—not to give, because she could not do that, and pay the whole rent of her small and humble home—she could not do that, and purchase a long-wished-for dainty for a sick and suffering parent. Her struggles may possibly have been great. She has longed to identify herself with the agents

of a good cause, in their efforts. She has felt like a kind of outcast or deserter from that cause, in refusing to have her name upon the list of subscribers. She has reflected—oh, how sorrowfully!—in her lone chamber, that when that list shall be read, and her name found wanting, hard thoughts will arise against her among those who can never know her real situation. She has reflected upon all this; yet, seeing clearly that she cannot do both—that she cannot be just to her landlord, kind to her suffering parent, and yet generous to the cause—she resolutely denies herself the greatest of all luxuries—that of giving to a good and noble object; and as she acts upon this resolution, and gives only her good wishes where she would gladly have given her whole purse, tears perhaps are streaming down her cheeks, and sorrow sitting heavily upon her heart. Now, where, let us ask, is the eloquence which sounds the praise of this poor woman? where are the plaudits which announce her triumph of principle over inclination?

It may be said that such merit is seldom known. True; but is it valued as it ought to be? Is it talked about, sought out, and brought to light, where it is suspected to exist? The fact is, it brings nothing in. It does not glitter on the table—it adds nothing to the sum required—it has no tangible results.

But in the busy and material state in which we live, seeing that labor is essential to the healthy and prosperous condition of man, how beats the pulse of human happiness amongst us? Do we not hear at times of the quick throb of feverish excitement, and then of sinking and depression, as if something were radically wrong in the constitution of our affairs? And yet we work on, and work more busily than ever, for we must have bread, and some of us must have luxuries to enable us to maintain our position in society. Whence then the weariness of life, whence the

vice, and whence the hunger and destitution, at which the busiest worker sometimes pauses, and stands, for a moment of horror, absolutely appalled?

Is it possible, after all, that this busy world of ours—this great workshop with its iron strife of engine-power, contains less thankful hearts within its bosom—is in reality less healthy, and less happy, than a stranger visitant, from its working habits, would be led to suppose? Is it possible that in such a state of things there exists a prevailing sense of weariness, not by any means confined to the actual laborer, perhaps least of all his portion; but a general weariness, relieved only by the excitement of starting some new quarry, discovering some new mine, or arriving by some means or other at the possession of a fresh amount of tangible and material good?

Yes, there is weariness—sad weariness in the midst of this beautiful creation, because to thousands and tens of thousands of the human family, there never comes a sweet Sabbath of rest. “Stop!” cries the good man, whose thoughts are in literal harmony with the times, and who understands the word itself only as indicating that day on which the churches are open, and the shops are shut—“I beg your pardon there, *we* keep the Sabbath strictly in this Christian country. It is our neighbors on the continent who do not.” Ah! my good friend, there are other Sabbaths besides that one day in seven which thou keepest—there are Sabbaths of the soul, and blessed, most blessed are those, who find and keep them on that day above all others. There are Sabbaths of the soul—deep “*silences*,” in which the material is hushed, and the spiritual alone holds filial communion with the great Father of spirits. Ask the mechanic at his board, how often these Sabbaths come to him. Ask the poor slaves of the needle, how and when they find them. Ask the railway speculator, the

great cotton lord, or the city merchant upon change, where their last Sabbaths were spent. Ask all, or any, from the highest to the lowest in this our working world, and they will not understand the question. The fact is, that none amongst them, neither the rich nor the poor, the industrious nor the idle, have any conception of such a state of immateriality. They may be most exemplary persons too in the fulfilment of all outward duties enjoined by the society or sect to which they belong. They may make their own Sabbaths more busy than any other day in the seven—busy too in acts of piety, and offices of love; and yet, as regards themselves individually, if not kept in perpetual action by the excitement and whirl of their many avocations, they would be weary—most weary! Away, amongst the hills or the valleys, where the visible and tangible appointments of religious worship were never heard of, they would suffer all the disadvantage of having to learn a new form of prayer in addressing the Author of the universe—a new psalmody in singing the praises of the Most High; while the name of the Saviour so familiar to their lips amongst the social and busy haunts of men, they would scarcely dare to breathe where it would be answered by no other echo than the sound of the mountain-torrent, or the whisper of the wind amongst the forest-trees.

When we consider what have been the efforts of mankind in almost every other branch of improvement, besides that of moral culture, we are almost led to despair of any efficient means even now being brought to bear upon this point; and yet the very fact that no such efforts have yet been extensively or systematically made, ought rather to encourage the hope that when they do begin to operate, satisfactory results will be the consequence. Society, however, must first be disabused of the notion that because good morals are talked about, there is any thing really

doing, or being done, towards the improvement of the world in this respect, at all commensurate with the improvements daily taking place in our arts, our manufactures, and our general mode of living.

We have only to look at the advertisements in our public journals to be convinced of this fact. New views are presented in every page, new systems, hints, plans, catechisms, manuals, and school-books of every description, all bearing direct reference to one portion of the human mind—the intellectual alone; while on the other hand we seldom find any which even professedly relate to the cultivation of man's moral nature, or the improvement of his moral existence. Compare too the deep research, the indefatigable industry, and the high intelligence, now engaged in devising means for the greater diffusion of correct knowledge as to the material world; with the little, the very little, that is bestowed upon the investigation of man's moral wants, and claims. The former class of subjects are now calling together philosophers, and men of science, from all quarters of the world, who constitute a sort of brotherhood in the wide field of intellectual research—a well-appointed phalanx in the cause of science, marching forth to fight with ignorance and prejudice all over the world, destroying old-established theories, uprooting ancient systems, and returning with their trophies every year, to prove to an admiring world that they have not fought in vain.

Nor is it with these distinguished men alone, that the merit rests of swelling the proud triumphs which science every day is now achieving. Were not the public mind especially directed to this class of objects of pursuit and attainment, even these great men might spend their strength in vain. They know, however, that the home-demand is equal to the utmost amount which their combined intelligence can

bring to bear upon our arts and manufactures : and that the discovery of some new combination of matter, producing even such a thing as a new dye ; some new impulsive process, by which a twisted cord can be evolved ; a new implement of any kind, and, above all, a new detonating power ; will make them greater men in public opinion, or, if not greater, richer, than any new process, however laboriously discovered, of making people generally love the truth, and speak it.

I grudge not the efforts of these high-minded men. Shame would justly be my portion, if I did ; but in my inmost soul I do lament, that while this vast array of intelligence is directed to the supply of men's material wants and wishes, the moral wants of millions upon millions of active, social, intelligent, and imperishable beings, should be left, so far as relates to our literature at least, almost exclusively to mere sentimentalists, or to the utopian schemes of philanthropic dreamers, who have never tested the practical working of a single plan.

I am aware that along with the subject of moral education is involved a vast amount of difficulty, and that, for some time to come, it must be attended with considerable uncertainty in its individual results. The same, however, might have been said some time ago, of one half of the benevolent and praiseworthy undertakings now established on so sure a footing as to be justly esteemed a blessing to mankind. What, for instance, could have appeared more difficult in the outset, than the task of teaching the blind to read, the deaf and dumb to understand the speech of others, and even to speak themselves ? When one looks thoughtfully at the amount of labor which has thus been so laudably bestowed—the patient watching, the minute attention, the slow progress of each step towards improvement, and the unremitting endeavors of those who have so nobly set

themselves to this and other great works of a similar description—there seems scarcely any thing within the range of human improvement, which need be despaired of, provided only, the real wants of man were believed in and understood.

This is, perhaps, the most encouraging view which can be taken of the moral condition of the world at the present time. If the state of society in this respect, and of our rapidly increasing population, were but one degree better, there would be less hope. Religious institutions have long been tried. New churches have been built, new ministers ordained, and even the blessed liberty of every man his own mode of worship publicly allowed. We seem to have tried every thing within the range of benevolent effort, or religious zeal, to carry on. We have sent out missionaries to foreign countries, and the shame of our own streets has compelled us to employ missionaries at home. We have distributed Bibles in more than a hundred different tongues, and are now issuing them with almost incredible rapidity both at home and abroad. Beyond all this, we have established societies for the amelioration of the condition of mankind, so numerous that there has almost ceased to be distinction in their names. And yet both vice and misery abound—the plague still rages, and the death-carts come with fearful roll of heavy wheels, and bear sometimes our early-cherished, and our best-beloved, away.

We have tried all these resources and expedients for the public weal, and now we are trying enlightenment. “The people want enlightening. Give them knowledge, give them books; let every child be taught to read. Establish mechanics’ institutes in every town. Admit the people to scientific lectures. Let them have free access to the sight of works of art. Let there be intelligence amongst

the people. Our schools must be in fault. Let them be multiplied. Write—speak—appeal—and make the Government give one more teaching.” “Collect your forces,” cries another class, “stand firm; maintain your principles. We want no Government supplies. Leave us alone to educate ourselves. We only want more funds, more schoolhouses, more masters, and more books.”

Thus stands the popular dispute, in this, the nineteenth century; and the nation, like a sick patient, whose disease is not discovered, still grows worse. Doctors, the wisest and the best, flock round the head; and remedies, beyond all calculation in number and variety, are tried without success, on that particular part. And still the disease progresses, and the sufferings of the patients continue to increase; for, lo! the malady is of the heart!

CHAPTER IV.

ONWARD MOVEMENTS.

BUT, notwithstanding the tendency of the present times to exalt, as the highest standard of excellence, whatever tends most to raise us as a civilized, rather than as a moral people, there are already hopeful signs appearing in the manifest working of an under-current, which, in due time, may probably turn the whole tide of popular opinion. Amongst these, is that growing conviction already alluded to, that our schools for the people are not accomplishing *all* the good which our various improvements, in the means of intellectual culture, had led a large proportion of the community to expect; and although the onward movement,

at present, is almost exclusively in favor of a multiplication of the same means, and an increase of power applied to the same process, it still argues well for our real advancement, that the public mind is *not* satisfied. So far then the case is hopeful, that the doctors themselves are beginning to inquire whether their old medicines may not, in some degree, be in fault ; and though this inquiry, at present, may be but as the voice of one amongst a thousand, still it is the voice of truth, and, as such, there is little doubt but it will succeed in commending itself to public attention.

Another hopeful symptom of the times, is a general conviction of the want of sound moral principle in our social and relative transactions, as well in the higher as the lower walks of life. There is, in fact, an almost total derangement of our moral system, which every one is regretting in its consequences, but few are taking the pains to examine in its cause. It seems to be taken for granted, that by assailing open vice, the evil is to be met ; and to this stage of the moral disease, our remedies have been almost uniformly applied. If we examine the nature of the human heart, however, and even if we look thoughtfully at human conduct, we see that the beginnings are not there. They are in those early stages of moral development which seldom awaken the least alarm. They are in habits of thought and action formed upon wrong principles ; little indulgences of self, and gratifications of inclination, allowed to supersede the dictates of conscience ; and thus wrought into a system fearfully at variance with the revealed will of God.

When a Christian parent looks at the temporal and eternal destiny of a beloved child, is it possible to regard with indifference the prospect of sending that child forth into society, with its passions unregulated by any higher

principle than such as a selfish or worldly spirit, contending for pre-eminence amongst spirits like itself, may call into exercise? And with no better preparation than this, for conformity to the divine law, does it not look too much like presumption to ask for the Divine Spirit to do that *in* the child, which the parent, under the same influence, might and ought to have done *for* it? We know that with God all things are possible, and that He who spoke peace to the sinner on the cross, has left open the doors of mercy to the most abandoned and depraved. But we know also that we are expressly told to train up children in the way they should go; and to give this right direction in early life, is the first and highest duty of a Christian parent. With all really Christian parents, it is unquestionably regarded in this light. The wish is not wanting, nor the will, as many an earnest prayer might testify; but if I might, without presumption, offer such a hint, I would ask whether too much has not hitherto been left to prayer itself—too little to the prayerful and persevering inculcation of sound moral principles in early life?

The aspect of society convinces us that this must be the case. It is difficult to believe that one-half of those instances of deviation from perfect rectitude and truth in minor things, with which the characters of the well-meaning, the respectable, and even the professedly Christian, are sometimes stained, arise so much from direct inclination to do wrong in preference to right, as from the absence, in early life, of a high standard of moral principle; and it is most lamentable to see how this want will sometimes hang about a well-intentioned individual, even when there is a sincere desire to be conformed in all things to the image of Christ. I am not, of course, alluding to any thing which bears the name of vice; I speak of negative rather than of positive defects; of the ab-

sence, mistaken use, or feeble exercise of just, and high, and benevolent sentiments ; rather than of the presence of that which is evil in itself. I speak of a low tone of moral feeling and character, even after conversion has taken place ; rather than of characters respecting which it would be a fearful delusion to suppose that such a work had been begun.

Children who have been religiously brought up are, happily, in a great degree, preserved from temptations to actual vice ; but are they equally preserved from envying, backbiting, misuse of property and time ; or, from false pretences, excuses, and artifice, even bordering upon falsehood ? It is seldom, when habits of this kind have been indulged in for any considerable length of time, that they can be entirely eradicated ; and, even after the commencement of a religious life, they often constitute that array of enemies against which the warfare of the Christian has to be carried on to the close of his career on earth, more disadvantageously and painfully than if those tendencies had been earlier combated.

The great prevailing evil of the day appears to be this—that religious as well as worldly parents, are for the most part too busy to attend to the minute and gradual unfoldings of moral principle in the minds and characters of their children. For this department of duty, the superintendence of a nurse, or at least of a governess, is generally thought sufficient ; and if, with the former class of parents, clear views of Christian doctrine are but instilled, if the Bible is made to the children a book of *knowledge* ; the formation of habits upon those moral principles which the Bible so uniformly sustains, is left to follow, as a necessary consequence of what are called “decided views” of its doctrines.

A painful illustration of this neglect is exhibited every

day in the conduct of Christians of different denominations towards each other. In the case of two individuals, for instance, whose views are equally clear and decided on the great fundamental doctrines of salvation by Jesus Christ: both these individuals are believers, according to what is called the orthodox interpretation of scriptural truth—both unquestionably are Christian men; and yet, as members of particular sects or parties, they evince a feeling bordering upon hatred for each other—not perhaps avowedly; indeed, I would throughout be understood to speak of *acts*, not words, and of that which *is*, rather than that which is *pretended to be*; and I therefore speak of such men, and of bodies of such men, and women too, as evincing, in their daily conduct, in their modes of attack and defence, of dragging each other's faults to light, of listening to erroneous and injurious statements of each other, and of handing forth such statements to the world with a sort of eager earnestness—as evincing under these and similar circumstances a spirit towards each other, which, if not absolute hatred, bears little resemblance indeed to that love which the Saviour himself has told us would constitute the test of discipleship with him, and of brotherhood with all who should believe in his name.

It is true that such parties, if accused of want of Christian charity, immediately describe themselves as loving the whole human race, and as longing and praying for more of Christian union amongst different religious bodies; but, like those levellers who would have everybody above a certain grade brought down to their own standard, but nobody below it brought up; so, it is but too evident that these individuals, whose hearts are so imbued with love, have little idea of any other Christian union than that of union *with* themselves.

My object in alluding to this painful and humiliating

aspect of modern society, is simply to show that the moral, rather than the religious state of these professors, is in fault ; for it is impossible to doubt, that if in early life the moral faculties of these persons had been rightly developed, and directed in their exercise to proper objects, the characters themselves, when brought under the operation of religious truth, would have exemplified in a higher and a clearer manner, the graces of a consistent Christian life. If, for instance, such individuals had been carefully trained to think and feel kindly towards others, to allow to others the right of individual thought and judgment, to be humble in relation to themselves, and willing to give place to others, to be cool and impartial in forming opinions, looking upon the establishment of truth as of more importance than any consideration of personal favor or worldly interest—had they, in fact, been early and systematically habituated to the exercise of the higher faculties of human nature, rather than the lower, there would have been a better groundwork made ready for the erection of religious faith ; and with how much more consistency than now, the Christian character would thus appear before the world, it is unnecessary to say. Hope has in some minds pictured a millennium, when the moral and the intellectual shall be systematically cultivated together ; when the Bible shall be made the text-book for the one—creation for the other ; and when both shall be breathed upon by that Spirit which is able to apply the words of Divine Truth, so as to make wise unto salvation.

But to return to the minuter details of this subject now under consideration. Without looking so far forward as to anticipate a millennium arising out of any causes which are at present likely to be put in operation, I cannot but regard it as a hopeful sign that the moral defects in our social constitution are beginning to be more and more ap-

parent. Those who occupy exclusively the position of men of business, will in all probability be the last to speak ; because in their social compact, similarity of action in all, is necessary to the interest of each. Thus, the tradesman excuses himself on the ground, that unless his brother tradesman will stand by him in his determination to recognise a higher tone of moral principle, he cannot make this stand alone. It would, in fact, involve him in a loss of business, and a loss of bread. Hence, the innumerable little expedients, which, if the master himself abstains from using, he is often quite willing that his apprentice and warehouseman should resort to ; and hence, a system carried on with outward respectability, which no man knowing it can say, with a clear conscience, he believes to be in all respects based upon principles of strict integrity.

But, silent, as it is perhaps better that the uninitiated should be on these subjects, it is not easy to be silent on that one great cause of moral derangement in our pecuniary transactions, which arises from the neglected payment of just debts—a cause, which, from the highest ranks of the aristocracy, down to the condition of the laborer and the artisan, operates most fatally to principle, both upon the non-paying, and the not-paid ; and this view of moral responsibility brings us directly to the consideration of the subject under an aspect most important to our social welfare.

Let this case in particular stand as an exemplification of what is meant by a *high* or a *low* tone of moral feeling, because it forms one amongst many which laws are unable to control, and which religious institutions do not seem to reach. Even if preaching were the means from which alone any improvement in this respect could be looked for, how seldom would those who attend the ablest ministry, hear any thing at all powerful or touching upon the subject

of prompt payment of their just debts. There is but one religious body that I am acquainted with, who have this distinct item in their moral code, and it is honorable to that body, that perhaps fewer instances of long-neglected payments occur amongst them, than others. But, after all, what is preaching, lecturing, or legislating, on subjects such as this, ever likely to effect, in comparison with the right training of youth to strict notions of moral obligation, to habits of regarding money thus held back as in reality the property of others, to a conviction that it is dishonesty to keep it, and that whatever is right to be done, should be done with cheerfulness, alacrity, and decision.

The same observations apply to all those imperfect views in relation to the rights of property, which are generally classed under the head of meanness, by those whom they place in the position of losers ; but which at the same time, with those who gain by them, are justified by excuses sometimes even meaner than the actions themselves. There is no subject on which the young in general appear to have more defective views, than on the necessity of scrupulous integrity with regard to little things. The poor are certainly both admonished and threatened on the subject of theft ; but here, as well as in almost all our methods of instilling right principles, we strive to frighten from what is wrong, rather than to allure to what is right ; we work upon the fears and the self-love of children, by telling them what direful consequences to themselves will follow a deviation from truth or rectitude, but we fail to inspire them with an admiration, a reverence, and a love, for what is true and just : and this, after all, is the only method calculated to produce the results desired.

It is not always in what is actually done, that a low tone of moral feeling is exemplified, but often in what is left undone ; and particularly in habitual neglect of those ster-

ling virtues which add nothing to our property, nor tend in any way to serve our own purposes in the attainment of material good. Those glaring acts of immorality by which our possessions are injured, our lives endangered, or our respectability lowered in public opinion, we are vehement enough in declaiming against; but the quiet tenor of a good man's life, the stanch resistance of temptation to do wrong, the self-denial of the generous and contented poor, the honesty that chooses and endures starvation rather than commit an unseen theft—how little is said or thought of these in the great world, or even in the more private circles of society, compared with what is said and thought of excesses on the opposite side!

There is a moral law which one would think a sense of common justice might dictate to all candid minds. It begins to be required in early infancy; and nature, and reason, and religion, all demand its exercise in social intercourse, as well as in moral government. It is an equal, and, so far as we can ascertain, a *just*, distribution of *praise* and *blame*. We often hear children, and servants, as well as others, using such expressions as this:—"It is of no consequence what I do, for I never hear any thing but scolding and complaints." And certainly the condition of the poor, and of those holding subordinate situations generally, throughout our country, in the present times, have much of this injustice to complain of. It is not that their absolute physical wants are neglected. There is a vast amount of charity and kindly feeling operating for their benefit through channels of this description; but what is done to rouse them to a cheering hope of moral reformation? and to inspire them with a noble ambition of becoming respected in proportion to their moral worth? In fact, they are but seldom brought to think of these things, and still less frequently to *feel* them. Punishment for

known offences, and suspicion where they are not known ; with plentiful provision on the part of the offended, in the way of measures for protection and defence—these are the means most frequently made use of, and constitute, with many additions of an equally lowering nature, a system of treatment which never did, and never will, do any thing towards raising the moral condition of the people, unless accompanied by measures productive of a tendency to elevate as well as to depress.

It is true, that in attempting to award a just amount of praise, or other marks of approbation, to merit simply as such, we are met by incalculable difficulties, arising out of different situations, temperaments, and liabilities to temptation ; by the strong conviction impressed upon every impartial mind, that what is merit in one person may be mere habit in another ; and that to the wisdom of Omniscience alone, belongs the power of ascertaining what has been the real motive of every outward act. But if we bow with humbled heads before the Majesty of Heaven, when speaking of our ignorance and incompetence so far to judge of what is right, as not to feel ourselves qualified to use so feeble an instrument as that of human praise ; how should we blush, and bow our heads in dust and ashes, when we think of all our fierce array of punishments provided for moral delinquency, of the actual nature and degree of which we must necessarily know no more than we can know of the nature and degree of moral worth ! Abashed at the audacity of those who venture upon commendation, we look around, and behold the vessels waiting on our shores to bear the banished ones away—away into a distant world—the father from his family—the husband from his wife—the mother from her children—the daughter from her parents' roof. We look around, and behold our prisons, and their gloomy cells. We hear the groans of

the condemned ; for life is not too great a price to pay when man believes it just ; and those who dare not speak of human merit, nor commit themselves so far as to judge of moral worth, erect a scaffold in the sight of thousands, and, lifting up the murderous axe, let fall the fatal stroke upon a feeble neck, exclaiming virtually, “ So let the guilty perish ! This man, at least, has had his due ! ”

“ Oh ! what are we,
Frail creatures as we are, that we should sit
In judgment man on man ! And what were we
If the All-merciful should mete to us
With the same rigorous measure wherewithal
Sinner to sinner metes ! But God beholds
The secrets of the heart,—therefore his name
Is merciful.”*

Bound by the necessity of the subject, and convinced that it is only from its seeming unimportance that it has hitherto claimed so little of the attention of an enlightened public, we are compelled to return from those awful extremes which are presented when judgment is dealt out upon the ignorant and depraved, to some of the slight tendencies and small beginnings to which it is so difficult to fix attention in the present day. It is, indeed, so entirely at variance with our popular habits of thinking and acting, to regard these seeming trifles—these unseen influences—these under-currents of feeling, which make no noise upon the surface ; that to attempt to illustrate what is meant by actual facts, must almost necessarily be to excite the ridicule of the thoughtless, and the contempt of the grave. Still there is no other way, for the popular cry is “ facts ” —“ let us hear facts, and then we may believe in principles.”

* Southey.

Facts in sufficient numbers are not wanting to the observer, but they are necessarily of such a nature, that each one stands for little by itself. The first of a familiar nature which occurs, is one that arises not unfrequently out of the public distribution of prizes, where we find an old and faithful servant receiving just one-third the value of what is awarded to his master as the owner of a monstrous animal, whose size is an outrage upon nature, and an offence to proper feeling.

It is, however, a hopeful feature in the aspect of the present times, that facts like these are beginning to find their appropriate place in our public journals, and are there treated with the ridicule and the condemnation which they so richly deserve. Too much, and too long, have instances like these, exemplifying a shameless disregard of moral character, and an open preference of some mere animal or material recommendation, been left to the pleasantries of comic journalists, and the "whimsicalities" of that sad moralist, whose touching melodies have taught us more than many a grave discourse. Too long have the serious and more enlightened portion of the community considered these facts as wholly beneath their notice—things acknowledged to be a little out of taste, just to be smiled down like an ill-selected fashion, but regarded as of no farther moment.

But, as direct symptoms of a particular moral—or rather an immoral—condition of society, they bear as strong evidence of disease in our social constitution, as the commission of open crime. Man is generally borne onward in his career of vice by strong temptation from without, and strong impulse from within; but when he sits in cool judgment upon the merits of an old and faithful servant—sits too in company with others, all knowing that publicity will give influence to their decisions—when they look to-

gether upon the worn and weary form of an old laborer, who, during forty years of service in one family, through summer's heat and winter's cold, was neither tempted by poverty, nor by comparative abundance, nor by the vicissitudes which must necessarily assail the life of a hard-working man, to any act of disobedience, or dishonesty—when they look, too, upon what must be the fate of a laborer, sinking into the helplessness and destitution of old age, and feel no benevolence towards him glowing at their hearts, no sense of right inspiring the noble resolution, that so far as their influence goes, at least, they will do honorable justice to the merits of that poor old man—surely this deadness to claims which might have been so easily and so appropriately recognised, is, among the intelligent portion of the community, a symptom of a negative state of moral feeling, as destructive in its consequences to the real well-being of society, as the more positive vices against which our condemnation is so generally directed.

It is not for an instant supposed that these judges of the merits of men and animals, the members of this intelligent committee, or society, whose business it is to award, in each case, the appropriate prize, are men insensible to feelings of justice or humanity. Like the needle-makers, they may be, in their own characters, kind masters, and benevolent protectors of the poor. The only fact which these circumstances prove—and that is a very important one—is, that there is no sufficiently decided moral tendency prevailing throughout society, and constituting, as it ought, the basis of all our social institutions.

Again, let us hail with hopeful welcome that strong symptom of the under-working of a different current of popular feeling, which is seen in the fact of some of our lightest, instead of our most serious, writers having nobly bestirred themselves to point out to general condemnation

a few of those blots upon our nation, as a Christian country, which long habit had so reconciled, that little note was taken of their existence. Let us unitedly rejoice at the arousing call, from whatever quarter it may come ; but there is yet a field of literature, a powerful array of influence, in connection with which these subjects have found but little favor ; and the religious world would do well to look away from its technicalities, its party-feuds, and ask whether the moral condition of mankind is not more legitimately the object of its care, than the separation of themselves from the society of all who differ from them in the minutest point, with regard to the outward ceremonials of worship, prayer, or praise.

When speaking of any moral improvement to be effected in the prevailing habits of society, we are almost uniformly told, that our views are utopian, that we cannot alter public opinion, and that consequently things must be left to take their own course. Now, education is precisely that which *does* alter public opinion ; not, certainly, the opinion of the old, or of the middle-aged, but the opinion of those who will form the next generation, who will fill our places upon earth, and who, if we carefully train them in what we believe to be right, will effectually carry out those plans which appear to us as most conducive to the good of the human race.

An education exclusively intellectual, however, will do little towards accomplishing this good end. The rising generation, by the instrumentality of teaching, and of books, may be enabled to think upon a much greater variety of subjects than were thought of formerly ; but will they learn to think more wisely upon any, or, in other words, will they *act* more wisely ? for right acting is a natural result of right thinking ; and to think wisely, is not merely to think learnedly as regards material things, but to think also

in accordance with the laws which operate upon moral and spiritual life.

Let us turn our attention to a familiar instance illustrative of the force of popular opinion when opposed to the moral law, by which it will be clearly perceived, that a rightly-conducted moral education might entirely overcome a prejudice which all are regretting, but which few have the moral courage, in their own persons, to oppose. I allude to the occupations of women, and the growing evil, increasing with our rapidly-increasing population, which places a barrier against women in polished society occupying themselves with a view to pecuniary advantage. Zealous and noble efforts are now being made to overcome this prejudice, as absurd in itself as it is injurious to individuals and to society at large ; but these efforts, directed towards a class of persons already arrived at maturity, and strengthened by habit, and association with the world, in the very prejudices which constitute the evil, can be of little avail in comparison with such as might be brought to bear directly upon the unformed character and unbiased mind. A child, for instance, might easily be induced to think that honest and useful labor is an honor rather than a disgrace ; that shame lies on the side of idleness ; and, especially, that there is a species of *dishonesty* in voluntarily continuing to live upon means which belong, by right, to another, when they are neither abundant nor easily obtained.

We know, in the present state of things, that all this is true ; and we reason, and talk with others, making high profession of our own convictions, that public opinion ought to be disregarded when placed in opposition to honest industry and independence ; but no sooner does the case become one of personal experience to ourselves, than we quail under the slightest breath of ridicule or contempt, though conscious all the while that the world is in the

wrong. And thus the sufferings of individuals and of families are increased a hundred-fold by shrinking from the exercise of this honest principle, until hard necessity has rendered it no longer a matter of choice, and the sensitive and helpless one goes forth into a world of strangers, because she has no home. How different would be the situation of hundreds of respectable, refined, and delicate women, if in early life they had been fortified against its vicissitudes by the cultivation and right exercise of their moral feelings! and how different would be the conduct of society towards those who prefer the wages of noble industry to the slavery of humiliating dependence, were the minds of people generally more deeply imbued with a sense of the superior importance of principle to every consideration of outward advantage, whether in their means of living, rank, dignity, or social position!

This evil, then, with the countless miseries which follow in its train, is one which it is almost hopeless to attempt to meet in the field which it has so long occupied, and the sphere over which it has so long maintained a triumphant pre-eminence. But from this very cause, there remains the less reason why we should not attempt to meet it elsewhere; and since it is only the young whose minds are now open to an opposite class of impressions, we should work, in thus forming and fixing these impressions, with at least as much assiduity as we work at a language, a piece of music, or a question in arithmetic.

With regard to the laboring class of the community, and our servants in particular, it would seem, to hear their conduct generally discussed, as if all good principle was wearing out, so seldom are they acknowledged to be sufficiently honest and industrious as regards themselves, sufficiently humble and grateful as regards their benefactors. The most prevalent ground of complaint is this, that they

live and dress in a manner beyond their means, and consequently involve themselves in difficulties, if not in practices of a dishonest nature.

Now, let us look this evil fairly in the face, and ask ourselves, what there is in society of a higher grade to induce these mistaken individuals to think and act differently? Are they not in reality acting upon the same principle as their masters and mistresses? There is no one feature more distinctly marked upon the face of society than a universal tendency to advance higher and higher in all the conveniences, embellishments, and arts, which belong to civilized life. Why, then, are our servants only to stand still? We know of no rule by which the law of progression should apply to every other class of persons, and not to them. The fact is, this evil also can never be effectually met by commencing here. The lady who visits in the cottage of the poor, or even superintends a Sunday-school, may shake her head with solemn warning, and set in trembling motion every flower and feather by which it is adorned; but so long as the flowers and feathers *are there*, she will fail to convince the little girl who gazes up with admiration at her charms, that she herself has no right to wear the same, provided they are honestly paid for.

I am not justifying the practice of wearing either flowers or feathers by this class of individuals, any more than I am presuming to condemn them in another class. All I desire is, to show that by the application of such means to such ends, we are working laboriously and inefficiently against the stream; because the influence of example, and the general feeling and habits of society, are directly in favor of that which we condemn. We must begin differently, then, with our education for the people. We must direct the ambition of the youthful mind to something more

really valuable than mere external embellishment ; and since, in all probability, we could not with our utmost efforts wholly eradicate the sentiment of vanity, or love of admiration, we must endeavor to give the sentiment a happier direction, by inspiring the wish to be admired only for what is really estimable in itself.

A few words may not be inappropriate here on the subject of *eradicating* certain dispositions or tendencies of mind. We may eradicate opinions, by proving them to have no foundation in truth ; and we may eradicate habits, by substituting others ; but we should find the subject of education generally much more manageable, if we spoke less of eradicating bad dispositions, than of giving to each of the faculties and propensities of nature its right direction, and appropriate exercise. Any or all of these may be evil, in consequence of being misused, and misused frequently from early infancy, owing to the ignorance or carelessness of those who undertake the management of childhood. If, therefore, we look for the innate tendencies to evil incident to our fallen nature, we behold them no less strikingly exemplified in the indolence, the selfishness, or the prejudice of the nurse, than in the animal existence of the little child, before reason has obtained its rightful mastery over passion.

In this, and the foregoing chapters, I have spoken frequently of moral training, a science which is yet but little understood. Some of the remaining pages of this volume will be occupied in describing a few points, which, notwithstanding the general ignorance on this subject, I believe to have been clearly gained. On these points we must rest, until we see clearly how to ascend to higher ground ; and as the traveller who has gained the lowest summit of a range of mountains, soon discovers how to gain the next, there is every reason to hope that the small

amount of definite knowledge already attained, will prove the prelude of a wider opening into vast and fruitful fields, whose riches have been too long unexplored.

A cheering prospect now lies before us, in the interest which the subject of education is exciting among all classes of society. Without questioning the utility of those means of instruction which have already been in operation, nor their adaptation to the circumstances of society among which they originated ; it is no proof of their want of merit in the outset, to state that they have not progressed in improvement at a rate proportioned to the progress which has been going on in things around us, and in the general enlightenment of the human race. After remaining stationary for some time in a world of progression, it is not unreasonable to suppose that education is about to make a vigorous and determined advance towards that foremost place in the onward career which high intellects and noble minds are ever bent on pursuing. This time, however, the mighty bound, the strenuous effort, must be towards the attainment of a moral elevation commensurate with that which has been already gained in the sphere of intellect.

The amount of what has now been accomplished in the way of moral training, may appear but little in its adaptation for being computed, seen, or told ; and yet it is calculated to be vast and momentous in its consequences. In the midst of a working world, it may seem but a trifling thing, that the heart of a little child should be made to bound with happiness at the contemplation of an act of mercy, or of kindness—it may seem but a trifling thing that a bold and wayward boy should be made to feel how beautiful is power when exerted in protection of the weak—it may seem a trifling thing that a feeble trembling girl should place herself unhesitatingly by the side of truth, though

disgrace and danger both were there—it may seem a trifling thing that each, or all should learn to substitute forgiveness for revenge, and should taste the sweetness of the exchange ; but we know and *feel* that these are sensations, which, when they have once taken possession of the heart, will impart more real pleasure, and shed more beneficial influence upon the life and conduct, than ever was derived from the possession of ease or luxury, of wealth or worldly favor.

CHAPTER V.

UNPRODUCTIVE EFFORT.

It is one of the striking characteristics of the state of society in which we live, that there is a busy working benevolence abroad, doing wonders for the amelioration of suffering and distress. As our population increases, and the general civilization and intelligence of the country advances, the real as well as the imaginary wants of the people increase also ; and as private charity becomes almost hopeless in its application to cases so rapidly multiplying on every hand, benevolent individuals combine together, to effect, by union of effort, a greater amount of practical good.

Thus we have philanthropic societies too numerous to be named, provisions for all who suffer under any description of casualty, hospitals for every disease, places of refuge for all kinds of destitution, and prisons for the punishment of every species of vice ; while the number of paid, as well as voluntary agents employed in working out the purposes of this benevolence, is scarcely less wonderful than the

amount of pecuniary means by which such efforts are sustained. In short, so vast and so powerful is the machinery thus put in operation, that if, in walking along the streets of our great cities—but more especially in penetrating the obscure alleys and courts with which they abound—we meet with an amount of wretchedness, at the sight of which the heart sickens, and hope gives place to despondency; we have only to look around into other quarters of the same cities, and we behold, in almost every street and square, some charitable institution where suffering may find relief. Indeed, so numerous, and so varied, are the measures now put in operation for meeting the wants of the people under every kind of distress, as well as for correcting every description of vice, that one is tempted to inquire, how it can possibly be, that there should still remain so much vice and misery upon the earth?

There is one consideration, however, which helps to solve this awful mystery. It is, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, this enormous expenditure of benevolent effort is purely *remedial*, is applied to the cure of diseases which have taken deep root in society, and in individuals, rather than to the preservation of health in constitutions which have been less violently assailed. Just as if, instead of pulling down close-crowded houses in narrow and filthy streets, and building airy and healthy habitations, we should spend our means in erecting fever-hospitals, and places of reception for the destitute and the sick.

In touching upon this subject, it is impossible to pass by unnoticed, the gratifying fact, that public attention is now beginning to be earnestly directed to that particular class of evils which has arisen out of thickly-crowded, close, and unwholesome dwellings. There is not one amongst the many physical causes of moral degradation which has had a more extensively injurious influence than this; and it is

truly encouraging to observe the praiseworthy efforts which are now being made on so large and so liberal a scale, to provide domestic accommodation for the working classes, which shall be at once cheap, healthy, commodious, and respectable.

Indeed, there is little that can be done towards improving the morals of the people, until some of these physical evils shall be effectually removed. We ask too much of any one, and particularly of the young, when we charge them to retain their purity of heart, their regard for decency of manners, and propriety of conduct, while compelled to associate in close connection with characters by whom the common decencies of life are neither observed nor valued. We ask too much of human nature, and especially of the unhealthy, the overworked, and the feeble in constitution either of mind or body, when we require them to retain their strict mastery over their tempers, and passions, their dishonest or selfish propensities, when pressed on every hand, irritated, tempted, or wronged, by the tempers, passions, dishonest or selfish propensities of others—pressed, too, without the possibility of escape, at all times, and all seasons, in sickness, in sorrow, in want, and in shame—without a hiding-place, without a shelter, except what has to be struggled for at the risk of dispossession—without food, except what is grudged, envied, and sometimes stolen, by those who are more hungry than themselves—greedy from sheer destitution, and spiteful from the very soreness of unmitigated suffering—yet crowded together as in a pest-house, the injured and the injurer, the hated and the hater. Oh! we know not the acuteness, the frequency, and the bitterness of those trials with which the poor are so sorely beset, or we should be more pitiful to their faults, and more attentive to their strong claims upon our efforts to relieve them at least from

some of their physical disqualifications for becoming better citizens, and more contented and peaceable members of society.

Amongst the many melancholy and demoralizing influences brought into operation in densely peopled localities, where the tenements are small, and the population poor and destitute ; even in some of our rural districts, where the inhabitants are compelled to have recourse to every possible expedient for the means of living ; there is one method of increasing these means, which has always appeared to me particularly disadvantageous in a moral point of view. I allude to the custom of receiving strangers—mechanics, apprentices, or journeymen, as lodgers in families whose means of accommodation is barely sufficient for themselves. Widows straitened in their circumstances, and left perhaps with several children to bring up, have usually recourse to this expedient ; and amongst these strange lodgers, whose characters beneath her humble roof exhibit themselves without restraint, her sons soon learn to imitate the habits, and the vices of their chance companions, while her daughters soon lose that modesty which is the poor girl's best protector.

To children placed in this perilous position there is an influence derived from the circumstances around them, more powerful, a thousand times, than any of an opposite nature which is likely to reach them while those circumstances continue to exist. What they learn at school may be very good, what they hear from the pulpit may be still better ; but the daughters of such a family, especially, are placed morally beyond the boundary of safety, and if they escape, it may almost be regarded as a miracle.

Long acquaintance with the habits of the poor, and the situation of many widows, who, with small and wretched habitations, have had recourse to this plan, in order to add

something to the scanty pittance otherwise obtained, have led me to think much upon the demoralizing effects of the system altogether; and to wish it were possible to commend it to the attention of our legislature, because the cases under consideration are such as demand the application of physical, rather than moral means for their prevention.

It would, I believe, be an appalling revelation, if, in our densely populated manufacturing districts, a clear statement could be made of how the working people crowd together, in what sized apartments, and how many in one room. I well remember, when visiting in one of these districts, going several times to see two poor Irishwomen, a mother and a daughter, both drawing near to death; and what seemed rather remarkable, both dying of consumption, though the older, and she who appeared the stronger of the two, told us, with great emphasis, that her complaint was a "faver of the lungs." The house they occupied consisted of two rooms, more airy than many of that description. There was no furniture below, and in the chamber lay the mother and the daughter, on two beds, feet to feet, never to rise again; the one burning with fever—and she died first—the other feeble and fainting, with that dreadful cough, not for a moment to be mistaken in its fatal meaning. But, in the same apartment there were two other beds, and, to my astonishment and horror, I learned, that in that dreadful atmosphere there slept four lodgers, and they were men! Indeed, the wretched women had no other means of living than what they obtained by these lodgers, and from the kindness of the friend whom I was visiting. Her charity sustained them to the last, and they knew no other.

In the same locality, a village beautifully situated a few miles distant from one of our large manufacturing towns, I have known working people so crowded together, that to

tell of the number occupying one small room, would almost subject the statement to suspicion of its truth ; and I mention these cases only, in the present instance, to show, that if we would apply preventive measures to the wants of the working classes, we must, in many instances, begin with physical rather than moral means. To persons situated in the manner here described, what education, however well conducted, would be capable of raising them above the lowest degradation ?

Those times, in which our manufactures and our different trades, having received perhaps some foreign stimulus, are more than usually busy, when the markets are brisk, and there is a proportionate demand for *hands*, are always called our *prosperous* times ; and it is no insignificant feature in the prosperity of a nation, when her working people enjoy a “ fair day’s wages for a fair day’s labor.” These are the times when hundreds and thousands of eager active people, men and women, boys and girls, are seen hurrying on, at the sound of the factory bell, to their respective stations ; and light and glad is many a heart amongst these companies, when hastening home, to think of all the warmth and plenty, and good living, which await them there. What boots it then to them how many congregate in one apartment ? The food, the *drink*, the money, have a tangible existence, are all there—and, what is more, are all their own. If children cry, or women quarrel, or chimneys smoke, or neighbors are not social, there is the beer-shop close at hand, the bench outside the door, where they can sit and smoke ; and many a place beside, where welcomes, not the most disinterested, meet them at the door, and never fail to meet them, while their “ fair day’s wages” last.

It requires but little acquaintance with the moral state of the great mass of the people in these crowded districts, during what are called our prosperous times, to know that

they are times of excessive indulgence in what the class of persons here alluded to regard as the highest pleasures of existence—those indulgences which they know that money can procure, and in which it is their belief that the rich are always revelling. Our working people are constantly and justly complained of for their improvidence—that, at such times, they eat, drink, dress, and make merrym, without regard to the future; but with high wages at their disposal, and without cleanliness, comfort, and even decency, at home—without even a right sense of the value of such things where they do exist, or the want of them where they do not, what possible preventive could be applied to the squandering away of such wages upon any sensual gratification which might for the moment be preferred, so long as the actual work of such individuals was duly performed, and the wages received were consequently their own, to be disposed of in any manner most adapted to their ideas of enjoyment?

Often and often do benevolent ladies and influential gentlemen undertake to reason with improvident workpeople of this class, upon the profitless expenditure of means, which, if well husbanded, might provide them necessaries in a time of scarcity; and almost as often do such kind efforts fail to produce their desired results. A few individuals from this class, to whom it is possibly a greater pleasure to save money than to spend it, act upon this thrifty principle, and thus become more reputable and more secure from actual want; while their children, profiting by greater advantages, probably rise higher in the scale of respectability, and even, in some instances, become wealthy and influential men. But, for the most part, such advice falls utterly unheeded, because it is applied too late in the progress of the moral disease, when there is but little, if any, chance of cure. And thus they go on from

day to day, and from year to year, as a familiar expression describes it—"living from hand to mouth"—drinking, feasting, and revelling, in times of plenty—hungering, begging, and complaining, when wages are reduced.

According to our present defective views of moral worth, in passing judgment upon this class of persons, the most covetous man, because he saves money when he can, and does not trouble us with his distresses, has always the best chance of being spoken of and recommended as the most worthy and estimable. According to this rule, no note is taken of his social virtues or defects, of his kindness or severity at home, of his generosity or selfishness towards those with whom he is connected ; it is sufficient that in a worldly point of view, he stands fast when others fall, he has money when others want, he possesses the means by which his wife maintains a reputable household ; in short, he is *a rising man*, and thus he enjoys our countenance, and our good word.

The good opinion of the world, and the preference of master-workers for such men as these, in cases where they have not a whit more real principle or integrity than many who waste and come to want, has exercised an injurious influence upon many, and especially upon dissipated young men, in making them extol, and absolutely prefer, the opposite extreme of character. Here then we behold a moral cause in operation, and producing powerful effects, exactly the reverse of what are intended, or could by any parties be desired. By a more correct adjustment of our own estimate of moral character, much of these dangerous consequences might be avoided ; for where a man is found of tried and known integrity, at the same time social, kind, and willing to assist his neighbors—where such a man, because he also saves money, is recommended as an example to others, and is promoted to situations of distinction

and trust; there is always found sufficient generosity amongst the young, and sufficient justice amongst almost all, to allow that he has earned his title to esteem, and that the world would be better if more could be found like him.

There is little hope, however, of arriving at any better adjustment of opinion in cases such as these, without beginning afresh with a new moral code in early life. The opinion of the world, it is true, already favors the direct saving of money as a material, and therefore as an actual good. But unfortunately the class of persons to whom especially it *is* a good, so far as the government of their inclinations is concerned, are but little raised above the condition of animals. They are, consequently, for the most part, stimulated by desires after a widely different kind of good, and their desires are continually warring against the saving principle.

The means of prevention necessary to be applied in very early life, are evidently, then, not such as would stimulate the *covetous* to *save*. These are already in operation in the world, and produce their full effect, through the instrumentality of hope in worldly advantages thus easily obtained. What we require in popular education, is something to inspire a care of property, and even a desire to save, in minds of a totally different character. Those who have no natural turn for hoarding, may at least be made to understand the value of property; if they are benevolent, and fond of doing acts of kindness, they may be shown how much greater will be their capability of helping others, if they practise economy themselves; and if they are lovers of pleasure, they may be taught that the highest of all gratifications is that of doing good. I do not mean that each child may be singled out to be taught by itself these separate lessons, but that our method of inculcating moral

truth should be, to place it in different lights, so as to commend it, if possible, to every diversity of mind ; and as we never can entirely know the characters of those we are attempting to influence, and may sometimes be mistaken, even after long acquaintance, the only certain method of proceeding is, to collect together all the evidence we can in favor of doing right, and to call into exercise every possible motive amongst those which elevate and dignify the character, taking especial care to leave to their proper obscurity, all such as are unworthy, injurious, or degrading.

Looking, then, at the social habits of the working-people in some of our densely populated districts, it does indeed appear a hopeless effort to attack their vices, unless we could at the same time pull down their houses, and build them others adapted to a more perfect state of bodily and mental health. The labors of zealous missionaries are here and there doing much amongst them ; and instances are not wanting to attest the blessed truth, that religious influence may touch and purify the heart which had never previously known submission to the moral law. Still, amongst the great mass of vice and misery which abounds, these instances are comparatively few ; and if the persevering earnestness, the zeal, the self-devotion of these missionaries, have been the means of saving but a *few* ; what might not the same means have accomplished, if, in the first place, no physical disadvantages had existed, and if, in the next, a favorable soil had been prepared for the reception of the precious seed !

But instead of a proportionate expenditure of effort upon the unformed character of childhood, we wait until vice has run a long career, until selfishness or passion have assumed habitual mastery over the actions and the mind ; and then when guilt and misery abound, and shame unblushing walks our streets, and intemperance sends its

reeling victims to the grave—then we bestir ourselves to have the guilty punished, the violent restrained, the hungry fed. We then, at great expense, establish a police. We enlarge our prisons, and build workhouses, and devise new laws for the government of human conduct. When the occupants of crowded, ill-ventilated, and miserable dwellings become sick, we receive them into large, airy, and well-attended hospitals, where they may be restored to health, and then we send them back to breathe the same deadly atmosphere as before. When the helpless and improvident, who have never been taught the value of property, nor inspired with the love of independence, come to want, when they beset us in our walks, infest our streets, and weary the world's patience with their supplications for food, we send them to prisons and to workhouses, to be supported at the public expense; and when the midnight disturber, the thief, or the assassin, is detected in any violation of the law, we send him to some distant colony, to carry all his vices along with him; or, worse than all, we consign him to a violent death; and to a grave in which we know that there is no repentance.

But the machinery required for carrying out all these processes is that which most astonishes the looker-on—the expenditure of money, of time, of patience, and of strenuous effort—the study, the care, the watching, and the forethought to prevent the active working-out of the selfishness and malignity of untrained human animals, for, when utterly neglected from childhood, we can call them nothing better—all this, in its development and exercise, and in the attention required on the part of the wise and the influential to keep it incessantly in operation—all this, too, with a rapidly increasing population, and with a proportionate increase of demand for its direct application, forms altogether an array of means for the promotion of the peace

and the happiness of society, so fearfully disproportioned to the good effects produced, that the wonder is, we should not long ago have set ourselves with head and heart to devise some more efficient measures for preventing, what it must now be but too evident we cannot cure.

We are perpetually told that no moral power can be put in operation calculated to affect the circumstances in question, that in fact there *is* no moral power that can with any propriety be used separately from religious influence, and that religious influence does not reach the case. The very fact that it does not and cannot, humanly speaking, reach the whole of the individuals thus situated, is the very reason why some other means should be applied; and in answer to the statement that moral means are incapable of being used, I answer again—has the experiment ever been fairly tried? Moral lecturing has, no doubt, had its share in all our plans of reformation, but moral lecturing is not moral training. It is for the most part wearisome and unproductive of effect, because it does little more than remind the hearer, that evil is less desirable than good.

Before any thing can be expected from the application of moral means, then, it must be generally understood that moral training in the early stages of childhood is an experiment which has never yet been made upon the great body of the people. Children in our public schools have been *trained* to practise decency, and so far their habits have been improved; they have been *trained* to practise obedience, and so far also they have been improved; they have been *trained* to reading, writing, arithmetic, and so far they have been made capable of rendering themselves useful in the ordinary avocations of life; nay, more, they have been taught to read the Scriptures, and from them have learned to *know* what is right in human conduct; but

have they learned to *do* it? for there is a wide difference betwixt *knowing* and *doing* what is right.

So long as we are satisfied that mere lecturing upon moral conduct is all that can be done towards training up children in the way they should go, we shall not advance one step nearer to the end desired; and so long as we believe that to train a child to the exercise of good moral principle, is to set up a standard opposed to the spirit of Christianity, we shall scarcely *attempt* to advance. Our grand neglect in educating the people is this—not to apply the principle of moral training with a force at all commensurate to that which is applied to intellectual training; and the grand mistake which in many instances has been the cause of this neglect, is to suppose that the interests of religion must suffer by having any thing short of the salvation of the soul proposed as a motive for moral conduct.

Owing to the prevalence of this great mistake, education has neglected the use of one of the most powerful engines, either for good or for evil. It has trusted to the spread of religious truth to do all; and unquestionably for this end it is sufficient, *if it could reach all*. We know, however, that in comparatively few instances the truth is listened to, in fewer still it is understood, and in fewer yet received into the heart. What then remains for the many who are not of this happy number? Are they to go forth into society guided by no other rule than mere inclination, and actuated by any low motive that may happen to gain the ascendance?

In attempting the great work of improvement in the morals of society generally, to be commenced as it must be in very early life, we have this strong ground of encouragement—that children are highly susceptible of moral impressions, and that they see more clearly the distinctions of right and wrong, than those who have mixed long with

the world, and have adopted its conventional notions of expediency. Savages have been known to reason thus—"I know that theft would be wrong in me towards you, because it would be wrong in you towards me." And much in the same manner children often perceive and define a moral truth, with the utmost clearness and precision. Thus, according to that admirable system of training,* under which classes of young children are accustomed to sit in judgment upon cases which have occurred amongst themselves, the verdict pronounced is frequently such as would do honor to a court of law; while the sentence, leaning always to kindness and mercy, is often productive of effects as touching to the observer, as influential to the heart and the conduct of the little offender, who is much more frequently forgiven than punished.

It may appear but a trifling thing to lay hold of in our hopes of moral improvement, to speak of impressions made upon the minds of little children; and if such impressions were not followed up with *training* of the same description, they would naturally be evanescent as footprints on the sand. But as impressions from society or circumstances are daily and hourly being made upon the infant mind, the great thing is to occupy the ground with those which are just, and true, and kind, to deepen and fix them, as well as to add to their number; and while strictly adhering to Scripture authority in this branch of education,—while endeavoring to make wise for this life, and for its many avocations, to endeavor from the same volume to teach those higher truths which make wise unto salvation.

Indeed, there are many and striking encouragements which meet us on every hand, in the business of moral training, if begun at a stage of life sufficiently early.

* As pursued in Glasgow.

Among these it must not be overlooked, that the exercise of the higher faculties of our nature is always accompanied with emotions of deep pleasure. It is a familiar expression, "that virtue is its own reward," and if it means any thing, it must be, that to act kindly or conscientiously, is always attended with a degree of satisfaction unknown to those who act unjustly, or with malignant design. There are simple stories developing the exercise of kindly feeling, which, when told, will sometimes bring tears into the eyes of strong men—tears, not of sadness, but of exquisite enjoyment. The same might also be said of those struggles of conscience under which selfish inclination is sometimes overcome by the mastery of heroic principle. There is something, too, in the exercise of honorable feeling, of justice, of benevolence, when opposed to the selfishness and insincerity abounding in the world, which, though we know in itself can constitute no title to the blessings promised in the gospel as belonging to eternal life, is yet capable of calling forth emotions so deep, so powerful, and so pure, that, while they influence the heart, it never can be more disposed than then, to acknowledge that He who gave it all these capabilities has an undoubted right to rule over it.

If we do not believe in the force and the depth of moral impressions, it is because we do not sufficiently *test* them. The strongest influences in life, beyond those of physical want, are moral influences. That of the Bible itself is a moral influence, laying hold of the affections, more than the understanding. All that men are, and all that they seek to be, in honor, and distinction, in the esteem of the world, and the affection and confidence of their fellow-men, is the result of some tendency or bias of their moral nature. All the confiding trust of the dearest connections, the benevolence of the rich, and the honesty of the poor,—all

that gives virtue to the word of an honorable man, and weight to the precepts of a truthful mother—all that protects the feeble from oppression, resists the encroachments of injustice, and surrounds the path of the helpless with safety—all this belongs to the moral nature of man ; and more a thousand-fold than could be named ; for, like the air we breathe, there is a moral atmosphere either of a healthy or unhealthy nature perpetually around us, and forming an important part of individual character and life.

Who, indeed, can look fairly at the nature of moral influence, even regarding it in its strict sense as relating to the present life alone, and say it is a trifling thing not worthy of attention, as to its right direction, exercise, and use ? Who would not rather be convinced, after such impartial consideration, that an engine so powerful, either for good or evil, demanded the utmost regard which could be paid to its claims by all the well-wishers of the human race ?

Yes, and not by the mere speculative philanthropist alone. It is high time that, as a nation, we should awake to this long-neglected call ; it is high time that our legislature should look to it, for the preservation of the true prosperity of the state ; that our preachers should allow it to be something worthy of regard ; that our philosophers should direct their attention to its nature, its laws, and its means of operation. But, above all, it is high time that education should lay down its high-sounding title, and the claim it has long held to be considered *the* legitimate means of improving the general condition of mankind ; unless, calling into exercise the higher sentiments of man's nature, it would direct its operations to the government of the whole character ; then, while still cultivating the intellectual powers—for none could be weak enough to wish them to be neglected—it might assume its true title, and, as such, assert the highest claims to our support.

CHAPTER VI.

PHYSICAL HINDERANCES.

THAT the general indifference with which the moral part of education, and indeed of character itself, is now treated, arises more from ignorance of the laws which govern human nature, than from want of interest in the well-being of individuals and of society, is, under no circumstances, more evident than when the mind, the inclinations, and the will are made responsible for those defects of habit and character which might easily be remedied by a little attention to the body. Nothing is more common than to hear people charging their spiritual state with what belongs almost entirely to their physical circumstances; and blaming each other for voluntary and even predetermined offences, and peculiarities of conduct, which are almost inseparable from certain physical conditions. This is particularly the case with young persons uncongenially situated, brought up to occupations for which they have neither taste nor talent, and required to perform duties for the discharge of which they have no natural capability. When want of proper method and application, or even when positive irritability exhibit themselves in such cases, it may be no proof whatever of moral depravity, but, rather, one of those natural indications of the unsuitability of physical circumstances to which those who are the guardians of youth would do well to take heed before it is too late. There are many physical difficulties which a high sense of duty may, and ought, to overrule; but we must first implant this high

sense of duty, before we have any right to look for its beneficial operation.

In order to do this, it is necessary to make ourselves fully acquainted with the nature and necessities of the human constitution. Indeed, we cannot think too earnestly and too carefully, in the outset, what are the actual requirements of human nature in its various developments. Ignorance on this important subject has been the cause of incalculable mischief, often of cruelty, injustice, and oppression, when the parties inflicting such injuries have been really well-meaning, and benevolently disposed. Could the history of young servants, for instance, be laid bare before us—the history of all they have to suffer and contend with, owing to their own ill-formed and mistaken views, but especially owing to the ill-formed and mistaken views of their superiors, instead of many of the complaints we now hear, it is possible that the heads of families—and mistresses in particular—would have to blush for the unreasonable demands they have been making, and the injustice and unkindness they have inflicted, while priding themselves upon doing what was strictly right.

With regard to the early life of those committed to our care, even in the nearest and the dearest connections, the same lamentable ignorance prevails. We may probably lay down excellent rules for the conduct of a family, but we seldom enter upon the study of mind, so far as to ascertain how those rules are operating upon individual character; and as soon as any thing wrong appears evident, we lament over the moral or the spiritual condition of the offender, without examining impartially how that wrong has arisen, or rather what has been its real though secretly moving cause.

As regards our care of the body, our system of manage-

ment is much more consistent with that earnest solicitude which the management of the character generally demands. As soon as we perceive indications of disease, we call in, as an adviser and assistant, one whose whole life has been devoted to the study of the nature and requirements of the bodily constitution. But who shall we call in, or what individual is there in the whole world, who has given the same amount of attention, *systematically applied*, to the mind, which is now given by thousands of doctors to the body; and this under every possible advantage, in connection with enlightened men whose lives have been devoted to different branches of the same study, and aided by all the benefits capable of being derived from the collected knowledge and experience of past ages?

The general reply to these observations would be, that as a parallel case to our doctors for the body, we have our schoolmasters and mistresses for the mind. But without any disrespect to those engaged in the duties of tuition, it needs but a very slight glance at the two cases to perceive how widely different is the preparation of a schoolmaster, how vastly inferior his advantages and his circumstances altogether, with regard to the consistent working out of what ought to be the great end of education—the formation and establishment of the character upon principles calculated to become the basis of intellectual and moral excellence. The preparation of our teachers is confined almost exclusively to the study of certain branches of learning, which have to be taught either in schools, or in private families, and can only bear comparison with the preparation of a doctor who should devote his whole attention to studying the properties of food and medicine, without paying any proportionate regard to the construction, nature, and habits of the physical

frame upon which they are to operate for good or for evil. In fact, the study of human nature, as a distinct science, including its physical, intellectual, and moral constitution, has nothing whatever to do with the usual preparation of those who are expected to be engaged in the duties of education; and, except what is necessarily found out by experience, and by constant association with the young, this class of persons are seldom better informed than others, as to the requirements of human nature, and the laws by which it is governed.

Thus it has but recently been discovered, that beyond a certain, and often a very limited, amount of close attention directed to one subject, a child becomes every minute less and less capable of understanding or committing to memory the task required; and that it is not always obstinacy, or perverseness, but more frequently positive incapability, which prevents a child kept late, and shut up to its unlearned lesson, from repeating it without a single mistake. How many tears would have been spared, how many punishments would have been avoided, had this discovery been earlier made! Happily for us, but happier still for those who come after us, mankind are not likely ever to relapse into their former ignorance, after the discovery of truths like these.

The child, with memory clogged and understanding stupified, who would formerly have been punished, and shut up to perform a physical impossibility, is now sent out to play, to throw about its restless limbs in all the enjoyment of vigorous bodily exercise, and to refresh its weary brow, and aching head, beneath the blue sky, and amongst the pure and animating breezes, that come like ministering spirits, as if sent to sport with childhood, and to bear away the withering cares which have no right to fill an infant's breast. This vigorous exercise, with all its life-inspiring

liberty, how glorious a thing it is ! Every living creature in the universe appears to understand its value, except man. And man can see the misery which the loss of it inflicts, when he contemplates the weakness, the irritability, or the suffering, of his own captives from the woods, the mountains, or the desert plains.

The want of regular, invigorating, and healthy exercise, has perhaps more to do with those evils which are generally placed to the account of a bad temper, than any other cause. For the number of cases of ill-temper which occur at home, how few in comparison occur in excursions or journeys requiring great bodily exertion in the open air ! Indeed, it is most amusing to observe, under such circumstances, what inconveniences can be borne with, what irregularities endured, and what a cheerful disposition to make the best of things, will sometimes pervade the conduct of those, who, when at home, are thrown into ill-temper for an hour, on being served with a cold plate when it is expected to be hot. An accident, too, endangering the lives of a whole party, and destroying no small amount of property in clothing and other valuables—how patiently it will sometimes be endured, by the very same persons whose wrath it would be impossible to appease, if subjected in their own house to the derangement of a head-dress, or the spilling of a sauce.

But it is not, as some are apt to imagine, a long walk now and then, that will, under ordinary circumstances, effect the good desired. It is the constancy and perseverance with which exercise is practised—the cheerfulness, too, by which it is accompanied, that sweetens the temper, harmonizes the feelings, and quickens the vitality of every power which duty requires us to have always in readiness for action. I appeal to all who suffer from morbid sensitiveness, irritability, or depression of spirits, whether, after

a walk or a ride on horseback in fine weather, and under circumstances agreeable to their tastes, they have not come back more capable of surmounting difficulties, more abounding in good-will, and better able to sustain with cheerfulness what was previously the *burden* of life: whether, in fact, they have not on recollection been disposed to smile at some of their own miseries, and to think this world, after all, is not so very bad a world to live in.

For my own part, I am much disposed to think that these two extremes of feeling—an excess of sensitiveness and irritability on the one hand, and a cheerful, contented, and even hopeful disposition on the other, have, in a vast proportion of cases, their foundation in the bodily, rather than the mental or spiritual health; and I recollect, in the life of the Rev. John Scott, a confirmation of this fact, which, from so experienced a Christian, and so eminent a divine, is worthy of attention. In speaking of cases of spiritual depression, when the sufferer complained of all those gloomy and discouraging symptoms which might naturally be supposed to belong to the condition of a sinner hopeless of pardon, the writer describes himself as generally startling the complainers by first inquiring what were their habits of life with regard to their hours of rising in the morning, and retiring to rest at night; and he states, that in most of these cases, he found the individuals laboring under discouragement and depression were in the habit of sitting up after midnight, and indulging proportionately late in the morning.

The injurious effects produced upon the mind by a neglect of bodily health, are perhaps more negative than positive, consisting chiefly in an habitual reluctance to perform immediate duties, to endure privations, to encounter difficulties, and to reconcile with cheerfulness any thing

necessarily involving personal discomfort. Under this state of feeling, morbid sensibility, pointing perpetually to self as the object of all aims, the subject of all considerations, and, in fact, the centre of the whole universe, creates a host of miseries from which it is impossible to escape, and which effectually render life itself a burden grievous to be borne. In this state of mind the truest friends are often suspected, and oftener still are thought unkind; each adverse accident, however unavoidable, is regarded as an instrument of torture invented for the especial purpose of inflicting pain upon that magnified and all-pervading self; the faithful adviser is repelled as an enemy; and regular occupation ceases, or becomes irksome. The fashionable then fly to dissipation for relief; the worldly find a resource in traffic or in money speculations; while the religiously-disposed, perceiving only the diseases of their spiritual state, either sink into despondency, or seek relief from a troubled conscience in that plausible excitement which belongs to an excessive outward manifestation of religious zeal.

To these states of feeling men are much less liable than women, owing to the nature of their occupations, requiring, as they generally do, a considerable amount of bodily exercise, and demanding frequently such close attention, that self, with all its miseries, must necessarily be forgotten during a great portion of every day.

But in connection with the physical health of man, and especially with his moral power to resist temptation, as well as to persevere in laudable and systematic efforts, there is one consideration of the utmost importance to his onward progress; a consideration by no means confined to man, though the habits of society place him, in this respect, at a great disadvantage with woman; I allude to intemperance—not so much to that degree of excess which

every one condemns as equally vulgar and immoral, as to those intermediate degrees which are usually classed under the head of moderate stimulus, but which, from their own nature, and from the difference of temperament and constitution upon which they operate, must necessarily vary from the most delicate and faintly perceptible excitement, to the most odious and appalling degradation.

Of the dark history of the crimes and miseries resulting from this latter stage, it is unnecessary here to speak. These results are now sufficiently felt and acknowledged by all classes of the community. Besides which, I am not ashamed to confess myself one of those who regard the evils of *excess*, as so entirely dependent upon the evils of *moderation*, that to attempt to apply remedies to the former stage of the disease, and leave the latter neglected, would appear to me a mode of proceeding more worthy of the disease itself, than consistent with the operations of an unprejudiced and reasonable mind.

In entering upon the serious consideration of this subject, as it stands connected with the moral progress of society, and in regarding it as at once the most powerful and the most degrading of physical hinderances, we need no stronger argument on this side of the question than some of the expressions familiarly used by those who are practical and open advocates of the use of intoxicating agents, not only as a lawful means of increasing health and comfort, but as an almost necessary accompaniment of social intercourse. It is impossible to mix much in society, without hearing occasionally the merriment excited by little mal-occurrences, mistakes, or eccentricities, arising out of what is considered a *very little* and a *very innocent* degree of this excitement. Even the peculiar energy of a speaker, the wit of an amusing companion, or the general cheerfulness and hilarity of a party, will sometimes be un-

blushingly attributed to a *very little* of this cause. But beyond this, we hear it spoken of where blushes might indeed be expected, but where they also fail to appear. "I was really so indisposed, my nerves were in so dreadful a state, that I should never have been able to support myself on the occasion, but for this."—"The effort would have been too much, or the shock too severe, but for this."—"My spirits would have failed me, the cause would have been suspected, or the party would have grown flat, but for this."—These, and innumerable expressions of a similar nature, sufficiently attest what kind of influence it is which this powerful agent exercises.

And is it possible for rational beings to listen to such expressions, and never once to be struck with the fact, that the same exciting cause which operates through these acknowledged channels, in a manner so openly sanctioned by the usages of respectable society, must have something in it which goes very near to touch the vitality of man's moral being?—something very likely to shake the balance betwixt good and evil; right judgment, and wrong will?—something very likely to lead the tongue to speak, the eye to look, and the heart to feel, what is a *little*, a *very little*, on the wrong side of strict propriety? Yes, and all who would recall their own sensations when under even a slight degree of this excitement, might, and would feel that such was their own case; that they were not, at these times, so clearly cognizant of that delicate line of demarcation which separates good from evil, and renders distinct in their respective bearings, those things which are approved by men alone, and those which are approved by God.

It is unquestionably true that under this excitement, the brilliance of wit, and the fervor of eloquence, may often have been quickened into exercise, and deepened in effect—that sympathies may have been awakened, and friend-

ships formed ; but on what foundation ? Let the morrow tell ; let the history of man's life declare whether his heart and his conduct before the sight of God, have been rendered more consistent and more pure by the frequent and customary recurrence of these moments of excitement. The very means employed, so far from being intellectual means, are neither creative nor suggestive. They only stimulate those active and physical processes by which the mind finds utterance and expression to what has already been made its own ; and this effect they produce almost entirely through the medium of excited feeling and passion. Indeed, the secret of the whole lies here—that feeling and passion, awakened into energy, give force to action, and vividness to expression ; and thus the actor and the speaker become capable of greater effort during any given time than they would have been without the stimulating cause.

Just so far, then, as the faculties which belong to mere animal life are put in rapid play by this kind of excitement, the human machine is thrown off its balance ; and just so far is perfect propriety of action less to be expected. There may, under such circumstances, be an appearance of great earnestness, great fervor ; at times a fine tone of poetic feeling may burst forth, nay, even something like devotional ardor ; high sentiments may then be freely uttered, and noble thoughts find eloquent expression ; but follow the speakers home, and see if, in all practical and present things, they are the sterling men they seemed—see whether they are guarded against temptation, and ready, under all trials, to *act* as well as they can *speak*.

If we were irresponsible beings, or if we had an instinctive and necessary tendency towards good rather than evil—if, indeed, there were no evil in the world, such stimulus might then, and only then, be safe. But unfortunately

for the theory of those who advocate its safety under the present circumstances of society, the fact stands evident before us, that it is only feeling, passion, action, and utterance, which are quickened by these means ; and that the reflective faculties are proportionately injured or impeded in their operation. If, then, there should be the *least* tendency to evil rather than to good, in cases where all this machinery of feeling and passion is put in action, while judgment, more needed at such times than any other, is lulled to sleep, or otherwise disqualified for use, the individual thus affected stands in a fearful and perilous position, as answerable for his words and actions to a just, a pure, a holy God.

Yes, and experience has proved it to be a perilous position to thousands, and, amongst these, to not a few who have looked back upon the experience of a week—perhaps a day—appalled, and well-nigh incredulous as to what length they have almost unconsciously been carried. Oh ! could we see the tears, or hear the groans, or witness the secret compunction of those who have to think calmly in the morning of the experience of the previous day, during which they had been perhaps but very slightly influenced by this excitement, of the dangerous thoughts, the imprudent words, the very looks, upon which no guard was set, the partial recollections so agonizing to a tender conscience, apprehensive that the truth, if known, might yet be worse—all these might constitute a sum of evidence which the mere moralist would look upon as of no trifling importance, but which the Christian would indeed do well to lay to heart.

Beyond the habitual and voluntary surrender of the power of judgment to the influence of excited feeling, I venture not to lift that awful veil which hides more actual crime—crime, too, more horrible in its enormity—than all

the other causes operating in a guilty world have ever been the means of calling forth. And yet all these are merely the result of farther stages in the same career which multitudes are now beginning—multitudes of the most lovely and amiable of women—of the most noble and gifted of men.

It is said—and the expression is accompanied with every degree of contempt, and even bitterness—that we hold *extreme* views on this subject. And why not, when the case is urgent? As regards the moral condition of the world at the present time, we are greatly in want of extreme views, for our necessities are extreme. Pretences and plausibilities have long enough been tried. We want nothing so much as an earnest determination to go to the root of what we undertake for good; and where the root is evil, and known by us all to be evil, by the poison-fruit which the tree has borne—where the root is of long standing too, and has struck deep into the ground, sending out fibres full of poison on every hand, ready to start up into new plants of the same deadly growth, we must be extreme both in our views and in our operations. Nor are we unprepared to acknowledge, with deep thankfulness, that we have earnest laborers now at work, and not a few in number, whose determination, vigor, and perseverance are, in all respects, as extreme as the ends they have in view.

This has already been alluded to as one of the hopeful signs of the times in which we live. Many of those who hail it as such, know well the defective, and occasionally inconsiderate manner, in which the work is sometimes carried on. But if they know all this, and if they know, besides, the disadvantages under which the laborers work, and the difficulties which still lie in their way; they know also the greater difficulties which have already been over-

come. Hence arises our hope of moral progress in this quarter, as well as in so many others. If we are to study every means of bringing the higher faculties of our nature into pre-eminence over the lower, and thus raising our moral standing altogether, as the condition of our country so urgently demands, surely there is no reason why the temperance operations should not be welcomed amongst other means of removing those physical hinderances which stand in the way of our individual as well as our national improvement.

There are, however, many physical circumstances besides those arising out of mere bodily affections—such as health, or excitement—which render the cheerful performance of social duties almost impossible ; and of these it is surprising how long and how perseveringly some persons will complain, without making the least attempt towards a radical remedy. Indeed, a close observation of human character, and a comparison betwixt the numerous complaints we hear, and the few endeavors made to remedy their cause, on the part of the aggrieved, would almost lead to the conclusion, that the act of complaining was one of the greatest enjoyments in life. However this may be, it is, unquestionably, a kind of enjoyment which, if indulged in to excess, is sure to operate with poisoning influence through all those channels of kindly feeling by which society under favorable circumstances is kept together. An habitual complainer ought therefore to be regarded as a common enemy ; and the punishment of such a pest should be, neither to be sympathized with, nor listened to—which, indeed, they seldom are, with patience ; but the obligation should also be laid upon them, to suggest a remedy for every grievance of which they are so fond of complaining.

These remedies would often be found to apply to physical circumstances, such as the presence of an unsatisfac-

tory servant ; the meddling of an unskilful assistant ; the continuance of a partnership consisting of characters who do not work well together ; subjection to obligations which are felt to be irksome ; association with suspected enemies, or with persons of tastes and habits altogether uncongenial ; submission to trifling rules of etiquette, which stand in the way of important duties, and do no good to any one ; haste and want of thought, in taking important steps without examining the relationship and responsibilities involved.

How often have we to listen to such complaints as these —“ The situation is not at all what I had been led to expect ; ” —“ Much more is required of me than I am capable of performing ; ” —“ The parties with whom I am associated are not the people I took them to be ; ” and pitiable indeed is the fate of those who, having made any of these discoveries, have not the means of helping themselves. But there are numbers who have, and who would be doing incalculable service to the world, if, instead of complaining secretly, and indulging a murmuring spirit within their own hearts, they would exercise a little independence of thought and action ; and, openly declaring the nature of their grievance, get rid of it altogether by a change of circumstance and situation.

It can scarcely be necessary here to allude to a fact which all are willing to admit, that abuses, offences, and grievances, are inseparable from every situation of human life. A proper resignation to what we have no means of preventing, is, however, by no means incompatible with a proper resistance of what it is in our power to avoid ; and I believe half the grievances now complained of in the world, might be struck off the list of human miseries, by open and decided measures being taken for their prevention.

The apparently contented, but at the same time secretly

dissatisfied condition of many who are employed in subordinate situations, has a very injurious effect upon the moral health of society ; and wherever this prevails to any great extent, it is a sure symptom of the moral constitution being in a diseased and dangerous state. In the first place, those in authority, when thus deceived by false appearances, go on in their accustomed course, ignorant or regardless of the injuries they are committing ; and even if conscious of doing wrong, they can shelter themselves under the reasonable excuse, that they have heard no complaint ; while, in the second place, the sufferers under such authority, believing oppression, though still hateful, to be their inevitable doom, submit themselves to it in a bitter and malignant spirit, detesting the injustice which they want the moral courage to resist.

The evils of slavery, prolonged in this manner from year to year, and from generation to generation, have, in some otherwise enlightened countries, become so interwoven with the whole fabric of society, as scarcely to be uprooted without some miraculous interposition of Providence on behalf of the enslaved. Indeed, we have abundant cause for believing that to be by no means the best moral condition for mankind, in which no complaint of injury is made to reach the ears of the oppressor. A thousand times more hopeful is that moral state, in which the neglected dare to cry aloud for justice, the captive for freedom, and the injured for redress.

We behold the complicated under-working of this low state of moral subjugation, in the lamentable case of our own poor needlewomen. The whole country has now been awakened to their claims, and to a sense of their miserable condition. Thanks to the genius of poetry, not a few individuals have owed their strong convictions to the language of a song. But what is to be done ? The wisest,

as well as the most benevolent, are wholly at a loss. The American slaveholder may taunt as with the aching brows, the pallid lips, the feeble forms, which, late and early, are seen along our streets, or, worse than all, are pent up in those merciless prisons, where strength and sinews are the price which is paid for bread : but where is the remedy ? The fact is, the evil has existed so long, the uncomplaining sufferers have bowed themselves so low, and such frequent and widely-extended advantage has been taken of their abject state, that individual responsibility appears scarcely to reach the case, and the blame which cannot be brought home directly to any person or to any class, is borne,—alas ! too easily—upon the shoulders of society itself.

With regard to the physical condition of individuals shut out, in early life, from the enjoyment of pure air and exercise, deprived of their natural rest, and condemned to the close atmosphere of heated rooms, kept also at the utmost stretch of those few faculties upon which the stress is urgent and unremitting—as well as in the case of children overworked in factories, or closely confined to any other unnatural occupation, at a time when all their physical and mental powers ought to be undergoing the process of development—it is easy to perceive that such individuals, in their moral capabilities, do not stand upon the same level with those whose moral powers have been matured under happier circumstances.

We hear ladies of refinement excusing themselves every day, on account of their disordered nerves, pronouncing it impossible for them to perform certain duties, to sustain certain trials, or to engage in certain efforts. Others, exempt from these nervous sufferings, may bear the cross accidents of life with equanimity ; but as for them, they have absolutely not the power to contend against these

things. Indeed, they hold themselves in a great degree exempt from responsibility, owing to the weakness, agitation, and excitability, from which they constantly suffer. For what has been omitted, as well as for what has been done amiss, they consider it equally hard that they should bear the least degree of blame ; and the plea of not being able to command their feelings, or of being too much agitated to know exactly what they do, serves their purpose on many of those trying occasions in life, when a *poorer* woman would be expected to act with perfect self-possession, and would be severely censured if she acted amiss. But if well-informed, and well-intentioned ladies—women sensibly alive to the strong claims of duty, to the relations of society, and the obligations by which its varied interests are sustained—can, when suffering under nervous debility, so readily excuse themselves ; for how much, in common justice, must those poor sufferers be excused, who, without one-hundredth part of the convictions of duty, the knowledge, or the intelligence which belong to the enlightened lady, endure, perpetually, a degree of nervous derangement of the extent and the sufferings of which she can form but little idea.

It is a fearful and a lamentable truth, that, in many instances, the injured parties have no means of escaping from the influence of those physical circumstances which poison their springs of feeling, and deprive them in early life of all the cheerfulness and elasticity of youth. There are, however, multitudes of sufferers who *have* the means of improving their physical circumstances, so far as health is concerned, in a great measure in their own hands ; and it is, of course, to such, that this appeal is made. It is addressed chiefly to women, not only because the care of bodily health in early life is especially a mother's charge, but because they have more leisure, and better opportuni-

ties than men, to give their attention to those minute, but yet important circumstances, by which the physical condition of individuals, and of society is most affected.

But, especially, is this appeal addressed to Christian women, and for this reason. When once the mind of a Christian woman has been fully awakened to a sense of her moral responsibilities as a social being, yet subject to the Gospel dispensation, she feels that there is no escape from rendering that faithful and unremitting service to her Divine Master which the condition of his creatures, in the present life, demands. No talents, no powers, no faculties, which she possesses, are, under these circumstances, regarded as her own. Her mind is a storehouse, which it is one of the first duties of her life to fill, in order that she may draw upon it for resources that shall never fail; and her body is a piece of complex and beautiful machinery, which the skilful hand of her Master has constructed, and adapted with the utmost exactness for her use in working out the purposes of his will.

If a servant, on entering into the household of a just and noble master, and after anxiously inquiring what work was to be done, should find her task appointed; and, for the proper performance of it, should receive into her hand a delicate, elaborate, and costly instrument, she would scarcely be so regardless of the value of that which was committed to her trust, as neither to inquire respecting its wonderful construction, nor to attend to its delicate and complicated movements. Still less, after having heard them described by others, and having formed some idea of their unparalleled excellence, would she carelessly throw the instrument aside, to fall into decay; and then go weeping to her master, complaining that she was but an unprofitable servant, that her ability to do his work was not equal to her desire, and that while laboring under so many phy-

sical disabilities, she had arrived at the conclusion that there was really very little she should ever be able to accomplish.

Yet very similar to this is the condition and the conduct of the heedless Christian, who will not give to the health of the body that attention which is absolutely necessary for the health of the mind. In strong contrast with such behavior, it needs but little skill to describe how the faithful servant, fully sensible of the amount of work required, of the probable shortness of the time allowed, of the wisdom and goodness of her master, and of the high privilege of being engaged in his service, would so value the precious instrument which he had given her for working with, as to make it her business and her delight to understand its beautiful construction, to examine, and preserve in regular and proper action, its minutest parts ; and when by accident, or by long use, any portion of it should become injured or defective in its operation, to seek to restore it by prompt and cheerful application to the most rational and efficient means.

By these remarks upon the duty of attention to health, I would not for a moment be understood to recommend a frequent application to medicine, or even to medical advice ; still less would I be supposed anxious to lead any one into that pitiable state of morbid apprehension, and subjugation of the mind to bodily sensations, exhibited sometimes in a constant craving for a new doctor, and not unfrequently in an evident delight on discovering a new disease.

So far from wishing to introduce a more frequent application to medicine on the part of those who are ignorant of its proper use, I believe no class of persons amongst enlightened society, would be more favorable than doctors themselves to a more general diffusion of knowledge with regard to the laws by which our physical constitution is

governed, and a more general attention to these laws while the constitution is still in health, as well as when suffering under the pressure of disease. By such knowledge and attention, the skill of the physician would be supported, and rendered more efficient; and were this branch of information more generally cultivated, and these duties more generally observed, the doctor, finding his endeavors thus seconded, instead of having, as is now too frequently the case, to baffle the devices of prejudice, and to counteract the mistakes of ignorance, would be able to extend his own practical knowledge into higher and more extensive regions of intellectual effort.

Before closing this chapter, a few more words are necessary on the subject which principally occupies its preceding pages. Much has been said upon the desirableness of physical hinderances to moral improvement being overcome, or got rid of as soon as possible; much more, however, might, with justice, be said upon the desirableness of accommodating ourselves to such circumstances, where it is either not prudent in ourselves, or not just to others, that we should escape from them; upon the obligation we are under in such cases to call up the higher faculties of our nature to overrule the lower; upon the importance of discouraging a disposition to blame outward circumstances, when inclination is really in fault; and, upon the duty of bowing meekly and reverently to the will of Him who alone can fully know what situations are calculated for our good. Even in the most disadvantageous position, physically considered, if God has placed us there, or, in other words, has laid a sacred obligation upon us, which keeps us there,—there need be no fear that he will require of us duties which we have not the ability to perform; such as, attendance upon public worship when laboring under illness, or observance of any accustomed

duty, when the couch of sickness, or any other object of absorbing and necessary interest, demands our careful and unremitting attention.

A very delicate line of demarcation in all such cases has to be observed by the practical Christian, and points of such apparently slight distinction have to be considered, that the utmost amount of self-knowledge, as to motive, habit, and inclination, is required for the task of impartial investigation, and the utmost amount of self-government for the duty of faithful performance.

It is in this department of Christian experience that a close study of, and intimate acquaintance with, the faculties of human nature—and especially the moral faculties—are so eminently important. It is not therefore merely for the sake of urging upon society in general, the necessity of adopting a higher moral standard, but more especially for the purpose of urging the same necessity upon all professing Christians, that these remarks are respectfully but earnestly offered to their attention.

CHAPTER VII.

NATURAL TENDENCIES.

THUS far we have considered the moral wants of our country, as exhibited chiefly by society at large. It may render more definite the observations yet to be made, if we now turn to the consideration of the moral wants of individual character. For this purpose we must glance at the leading tendencies of disposition in boys, as distinct from those of girls. Of these, however, it may not be

necessary to specify more than two—self-esteem in the former case, and love of approbation in the latter.

I select these, because from their being generally so well understood, and so familiar in their developments, it will be the more easy to point out the manner in which they are affected by the influence of society, as well as by that of education as it is usually carried on. In boys, then, we will consider self-esteem, or pride; and in girls, love of approbation, or vanity; as being amongst their leading and distinctive characteristics. Self-esteem, in its mode of operation, in the tone of feeling it imparts, and the habits it gives rise to, may vary through all the gradations of selfishness, egotism, arrogance—love of power, of dominion, and of influence—even up to a proper dignity and self-respect, highly valuable as a manly attribute, and a means of preserving from what is contemptible or mean.

Having to deal with more or less of this tendency in every boy brought under the influence of education; seeing, too, that it may be made an agent for good, as well as for evil, it becomes of the utmost importance to examine how this tendency has hitherto been treated, and how it may be treated in future, so as to render it conducive to happier results.

In the outset, however, I have honestly to confess, that no subject which has ever engaged my serious attention, has presented to my mind so many and such apparently insurmountable difficulties as the moral training of boys, especially in the higher walks of life. The remarks offered on this subject will therefore necessarily be more brief than on the moral training of girls.

With regard to the sons of gentlemen, unless society itself, and what is called the best society, would adopt, universally, a purer moral code, there certainly does not appear to be any influence short of religion capable of

exercising sufficient power to counteract, in any important degree, that education which circumstances are carrying on around them, and within their hearts, amongst their companions at school and college, and, indeed, wherever the young gentleman finds intercourse and fellowship with gentlemen like himself. To deviate, in any degree, from the moral standard adopted by this class of the community, is almost invariably considered as just so much loss of dignity. To maintain his position—and not the meanest place either—in such society, is consequently the first thought, and the highest aim, in whatever he does. Notwithstanding these restrictions, however, he enjoys no trifling share of liberty in the indulgence of his inclination, or his will. The line of demarcation stretches far and wide in this direction, allowing ample scope for physical enjoyment, and self-gratification of almost every kind.

To suggest, however kindly, and carefully, to a boy thus situated, any motive not recognised within the circle whose habits constitute his law, is at once to bring upon ourselves his utmost contempt, either openly expressed, or imperfectly concealed. Indeed, so strong is the influence thus exercised by external circumstances, that even his own conduct, in the outset of his career, is often a violation of his better feelings, and a real sorrow to his unsophisticated heart. But the hardening process to which he is subjected, soon takes effect. The yoke, which at first felt irksome, begins to be worn easily, and even with grace. His father's warning, and his mother's precepts, die away like distant echoes on his ear. It would be childish and puerile to recall them; for now he is a man, and must compete with other men, and fight the battles they fight, on that great arena which they call the world.

This determination taking deep root in the minds of boys, and producing all those consequences in afterlife

which mark a worldly—and too often a worse than mere worldly—career, is much more frequently the result of self-love, or pride, which stimulates them to stand first in whatever the world looks up to, than of a direct or deliberate desire to do what is wrong in preference to what is right. So far from this, if the same class of society could be brought to adopt unitedly a nobler and a purer standard for the regulation of their conduct, would there not, even now, be many a youth about to begin his worldly course, ready to hail such a new order of things with unqualified delight? No delight, however, would be exhibited at such a change, after the course which is now so generally pursued, had once begun; and the beginning may commence at home, as well as at school. The taste of self-indulgence is so sweet, the possession of what all desire so precious, the love of power so strong, the thought of mastery so exalting, that having once enjoyed these attributes of boyish greatness, they are most difficult to resign; and where the atmosphere of home is uncongenial to the cultivation of higher and more noble feelings, a boy may be in all respects as disadvantageously circumstanced beneath his father's roof, as in a public school. Indeed, it is by no means an uncommon thing to find in private families, that the boy who obtains in the nursery the character of a "sharp-witted fellow," is the most esteemed; and while some slight corrective expressions may now and then escape the parent's lips, when his precocious cunning has gone a shade too far, these are so frequently accompanied by looks and smiles which indicate a favorable leaning towards the thing itself, as ominous of success, or wealth, or eminence, in afterlife, that the dullest child in the family is left under no mistake about the estimation in which this sharpness of wit is really held.

So soon as the little lover of himself associates with other boys, too, he finds that, all being anxious for the attainment of the same ends, mastery and possession, *he* is esteemed the most clever who obtains and holds as his own the most of whatever constitutes the supreme object of desire. The selfish and sharp-witted thus maintains his place, and often a high place, amongst his young companions ; not by the exercise of kindness, generosity, or any other noble sentiments—not by the exhibition of patience, long-suffering, self-denial, charity, or benevolence—but by the spirit of mastery, which prompts him, in some cases, to fight, inch by inch, for whatever he determines to possess, or to be ; and in other cases, by the exercise of a peculiar kind of quickness, and even of artifice, which, if only kept within certain limits of mere conventional determination, is practically as much applauded as more honorable means.

I say *practically*, because no one would place himself so low, even in his own esteem, as to acknowledge such to be the case ; but when we look round upon the world, and see *what* men are honored by the world, and *why*, it is impossible to be insensible to the fact, that it is their high position, not their mode of attaining it, which distinguishes them above others. It is what they have absolutely obtained in one way or another, the sum of actual property of which they are the masters, whether that property consists of lands, or merchandise, of wealth, or titles : that which the world can see, hold, buy, or speak of, as a thing of actual gain—*that* is the true standard by which men are valued ; not the motives which operate upon the whole tenor of their lives, and especially not those motives, the frequent exercise of which would necessarily tend to keep them poor.

There is one standard, however, to which the boy who

enters upon his worldly career submits his actions without reserve—one code of laws acknowledged sometimes by those who consider themselves amenable to no other—the laws of honor; and when we see what sacrifices men can make both of interest and of inclination to satisfy the claims of this imaginary power, which they have chosen to invest with little less than supreme authority over their lives and actions; we are at once convinced, that there must be something more potent in the unseen influences which touch the vital springs of action, than in all that exists and operates merely through the medium of what is visible and material.

The powerful, and in some cases all-pervading influence of these two ideas—honor and glory—ought to teach the moralist a deep lesson. It ought to teach, that wherever the same emotions which are now called forth by an imaginary honor, and a false glory, can be called forth by a higher honor, and a truer glory, they may become as influential in producing moral good, as they now unfortunately are in producing moral evil. Both operate upon the self-love and the ambition of the young. Why should we not endeavor to enlist these powerful sentiments on the side of useful, virtuous, and noble effort?

Let us take, for example, the love of power or mastery. Where this as a natural endowment exists in high degree, it would be a mockery to suppose, that, like a weed in a garden, it can be uprooted from the constitution of the individual to whom it belongs as a part of his nature, though it may unquestionably be modified, and overruled in its operation, by calling into use more amiable and softening influences. Still, such a man, even as a Christian, will rather lead than follow; and his efforts will generally be productive of the happiest results, where, if not disqualified by ignorance or the absence of other neces-

sary endowments, he is allowed to act in a position of influence, importance, or trust.

Such being the case, we ought to consider well what can be done with this love of power when early exhibited in the character of a boy, or rather when exhibited, as it generally is, in a greater or less degree, in the characters of all boys. We have already regarded it as most frequently showing itself in a spirit of mastery, prompting to the attainment of every object of desire, either by force or by artifice, and as such meeting with no small encouragement in the world, and amongst the common avocations of life, especially such as belong to the stirring interests of business and commerce. Nor here alone, but everywhere is this spirit of selfishness to be heard exulting in mastery over others; not only in the field of battle, but in many a nobler field, where all the good that might have been accomplished, is effectually frustrated by the strife of party; and where the boast is ever—"I have baffled or subdued a rival interest," rather than—"I have assisted in gaining a point of vast importance to the happiness of mankind." This boast the boy perpetually hears—"I have beaten such a man, or such a company of men"—and thus, from the impression produced upon his mind by circumstances, he learns to regard the exercise of mastery or power as the greatest good on earth.

In connection with this exercise of power, which boys esteem so highly, there are two opposing principles to be considered; and surely, it would be no more difficult to impress the *higher* than the *lower* principle upon the mind, provided the attempt was made in early life, and carried out consistently into practice. The first of these is the beautiful, the noble, the sublime principle, in accordance with which we look upon the attribute of power as being

given for purposes of assistance and protection ; to be employed in the service of the unfortunate, the feeble, or the helpless ; or for effecting great and important objects essential to the good of mankind, for which the weak or the fearful are incompetent.

The second is the hateful, the mean, the odious principle, according to which we look upon the possession of power as a warrant to oppress the helpless, to take advantage of the ignorant and feeble, or to trample down the friendless and the poor.

The charge of acting upon this latter principle would no doubt be repelled with indignation wherever it might happen to be applied to individual character ; but what shall we say, then, of all those sufferers, who, because they cannot help themselves, are made to suffer more ? And what is the history written upon those dark pages of human life, which the world has agreed to keep shut ? or whence comes that system of cruelty by which the weakest, the gentlest, and often the most unoffending of created beings, are made the victims of the selfish, the daring, and the powerful ?

But to turn away from subjects which cannot be contemplated in their heartlessness and injustice, without filling with bitterness the mind of the thinker ; let us look back to those brighter views which arise out of a comparison of the two principles already described ; and the conviction, that if the former were fully recognised in the early experience of man, the weak generally, and woman in particular, would find her truest friend and her noblest protector, where she now too frequently finds her most un-pitying enemy.

Suppose, then, there should be a decided determination throughout society, pervading our home-influence as well as our educational schemes, to impress upon the mind of

every boy, as clearly and perseveringly as we endeavor to impress a Greek verb, or a question in algebra, the idea that power is but a means to an end, and that the only real value of power is to enable its possessor to do a greater amount of good ; what a difference would be presented in the lives of men generally, could this impression be fully made, and distinctly preserved !

Nor need we entirely despair of this great end being accomplished. We have only to point out a course a little more difficult, to those who delight in accomplishing what they believe to be great—we have only to place a loftier distinction before the view of those who exult in pre-eminence. And there are innumerable methods by which this may be done, both at home and at school. Even the pugilist, who offers battle on the slightest provocation, and whose ambition it is to obtain by this means a position of physical mastery over all his companions, might surely be made to understand, that it often requires more real courage to take the part of a poor, despised, or persecuted person, than to fight a distinguished one. In the same manner a boy might surely be made to feel, that more true nobility and generosity of character is displayed in kindly helping a dull, but willing schoolfellow with his lesson, in apologizing for, or putting the best construction upon the faults of his companions, in defending a weak and timid stranger in the playground, or in privately supplying from his own pocket the means of enjoyment to one who is less plentifully furnished, than in obtaining the highest eminence ever gained by the exercise of the mere instinct of selfishness, and love of power. A sensible boy might surely be made to understand that the noblest mastery he can attain, is a mastery over his own passions—a victory over himself ; so that whatever enterprise he may engage in, or whatever duty may rest upon him as a gentleman, a

man, or a Christian, he may be able to rise above sloth and indulgence, and, shaking himself free from all meaner considerations, to act with that moral bravery which distinguishes the truly great. It is surely no difficult task to impress upon the unsophisticated and warm heart of a boy, a conviction that the highest nobility is to stand free from all personal selfishness, and to be ready, on every occasion when a great or generous purpose is to be accomplished, to throw his warm feelings, his vigorous intellect, and his strong physical power into the scale of justice, truth, or virtue.

It is, in fact, the exhibition of some of these high and manly traits of character—and there is reason to doubt whether it is in reality any thing more—which has so long directed the admiration of the world towards the exploits of the soldier and the warrior ; this contempt of the little in comparison with what has been regarded as the great ; this strong determination not to be appalled by danger, or deterred by difficulty ; this utter forgetfulness of self in the moment of action, and disregard of all mere personal considerations when any thing daring was to be done ; this onward course, undaunted, with the glittering steel before his eyes, and the death-shot whistling round his brow—still onward, though with the tide of life fast streaming from his wounds—and onward still, when the dark curtain had begun to fall, and his glazed eye grew dim ; yet, even then, forgetful of himself, his last breath cheering on his comrades with the cry of “onward” still ;—it is all this, more than the pomp and circumstance of war, which has deceived the world into a blind belief, that just because the energy, the fire, the strong determination, and the dauntless bravery of those who fought, were noble means, the ends for which those means were used, must needs be noble too. And thus mankind forgot the reckless waste of life, the

cruel slaughter, and the wholesale murders of the warrior, in the firmness, the courage, and the strength of the arm by which they were perpetrated.

If, then, the admiration which the world is already prepared to offer to these exhibitions of manly daring, firm purpose, and vigorous action, *could* be directed to the same attributes of character exercised through more salutary channels, and employed for higher purposes, such as the interests of society and the good of the whole human family require; we should find here, in the very groundwork of man's natural character, the materials for a new order of thinking, feeling, and acting, so soon as a higher standard of moral excellence is generally adopted.

With regard to that class of boys whose situation in life throws them early into connection with business, either in the way of trade, or commerce, so short a time is generally allowed for the formation of their characters under the influence of home, that, above all others, they appear to require the application of some direct moral training calculated to be influential in the government of their after lives. If, from amongst the former class, we look for our future statesmen and rulers, who shall sit in council upon the affairs of our country, enact laws for the regulation of the people, and give a tone to the habits of social intercourse throughout the higher ranks of the community, and thus necessarily, through all ranks; from amongst the latter class, we not only look for many who will, in all probability, rise into the higher, but we find here a vast field of activity at work—a mass of industry and intellectual power, which, if united and consistent in its operations, is capable of throwing overwhelming weight into any scale towards which its opinions may lean.

It is not always as statesmen, nor even as heroes, that men exert the widest influence in a moral point of view.

Men of business in England may be said to constitute the body of the people. As such, then, in their united power, and in the general tendency of their principles and actions, they fix the moral standard of a large and important portion of the community. How individuals, thus situated, are prepared for the high responsibility of fixing this standard aright, is a question fraught with considerations by no means encouraging to those who seriously contemplate the aspect of the world in which we live.

The sons of men of business, especially in our large towns, can necessarily derive but little benefit from the moral training of the father of the family ; because, for such training to be of any real advantage, it must be applied at the moment it is most required, and consistently carried out through all the social intercourse of daily life. The mother, in such cases, is considered, almost universally, the responsible person ; and such is the pressure of the mother's real or imaginary cares, that she is only too happy to get her sons sent off to school, in the hope of placing them under more able management than her own. This management usually consists of different series of lessons to be learned, and just so much order and respectful conduct as are necessary for the good of the school. And thus far, nothing could be better, provided the boy was to remain at school during the whole of his life. At an early age, however, he is placed out as a clerk, assistant, or apprentice, and to the duties of the desk, the warehouse, or the counter, nearly the whole of his waking-time is devoted. If his industry and application are crowned with success, after passing through various gradations, he may possibly find himself in the position of a man of property ; and the good or the bad influence he may then exercise, will depend entirely upon the views he has entertained of moral responsibility, and the corresponding habits which he has formed.

For one prosperous man of business, however, there are many, who, to the end of their lives, experience one continued struggle to maintain a bare appearance of comfort and respectability; and the little time and ability which men thus circumstanced can possibly possess, for raising the moral tone even of their own families, much less of society at large, renders it an object of incalculable importance, that some means should be adopted in our systems of education, calculated to operate directly and decidedly upon the moral sentiments. We have surely talked long enough on this subject without acting; and, now that popular education has become one of the leading subjects of the day, a favorable crisis seems to have arrived, for making this grand experiment upon a scale so extensive as fully to test its advantages, if earnestly and efficiently carried out.

It has justly been observed on this important subject, that "we live in times when the question is not *whether*, but *how* the poor shall be educated." And the same writer* goes on to say—"I am aware that some enthusiasts in the cause of education anticipate results from it, which we know, as Christians, can never, through this instrumentality alone, be accomplished. To the unsanctified heart, education may often be a bane, and not a blessing; but I do believe that it is impossible for us, except by miracle, to sustain Christianity in this country, unless very decided and very energetic measures be speedily adopted, to secure for our manufacturing population that moral training which is the basis of all good education, and without which religion becomes a mere dogma—an illegitimate mode of expressing political sentiment. Although I would not confound moral training with what I consider to be religious

* Dr. Hook.

education, yet such training may be used as the handmaid of religion, and for want of it thousands of our fellow-creatures are relapsing into barbarism, and becoming worse than heathens."

A strange anomaly has indeed for a long time existed in connection with this subject. We have so long talked about morals, without understanding our own meaning, and have so long assigned to the word itself a respectable place in connection with education, without examining whether or not it had any reality there; we have been so long satisfied too with the epithet *good*, as applied to both, as to be lulled into a sort of easy and comfortable belief, that *good* moral conduct must follow as a necessary consequence, upon what the world has agreed to denominate *good* education. But the fact that this good education, which has now been tested for a considerable length of time upon a large portion of the community, does not produce those moralizing effects which had been anticipated, might ere this, one would suppose, have awakened the inquiry, whether in reality it may not be the *quality* rather than the *quantity* of our popular education, which is in fault? and whether we should not be wiser to endeavor to bring a new power into operation, than to expend our means upon establishing an increased apparatus for teaching what is already taught, without producing effects of the kind which the present condition of our country so urgently requires?

The outburst of children at the moment of separation from some of our schools for the people, might, one would think, convince any one familiar with the language then heard, and the scenes which then present themselves, that the education carried on within the walls had not been, in all respects, the best calculated for softening the passions, and harmonizing the tempers, of youth. And yet we are

absolutely astonished, and can in no way account for the fact, that so much spelling, reading, grammar, arithmetic, and even writing to boot, should not have made the pupils admitted to such advantages less selfish, quarrelsome, vicious, and depraved. We are absolutely astonished, that the boy who has stood the first of his class in geography should go out and fight; that the best reader should steal the next boy's dinner; that he who has gained the prize in arithmetic should use profane language; and that he who has been advanced to running-hand should trip up the heels of a lame child, and scamper off believing himself to have done a droll and clever thing.

In fact, we are astonished, that with so handsome and commodious a schoolroom as we have built, so excellent a master as we employ, such admirable books and lessons as we use, such an intelligent committee as sit, at stated times, in consultation upon the school—we are astonished that the children, altogether, upon whom these blessings are so liberally bestowed, should, in many instances, be so little superior in their moral conduct, to those who have never been brought under any instruction at all.

But the reason for all this is more clearly understood, when we reflect, that such children, however highly they may have been taught, have had only half their faculties brought under any kind of systematic training during the hours of school-discipline. The other half, bursting forth into exercise the moment all personal restraint is withdrawn, display themselves in any manner to which passion or appetite may lead. Hence follows, among this class of boys, that general disregard of moral obligation, and violation of moral law, by which they defy the authority of the master, and defeat one of the great objects of our educational institutions.

It is not a mere speculative opinion, nor yet a mere sug-

gestion of philanthropy, that the moral portion of our nature demands an equal, if not a larger share of our attention than the intellectual. We have the highest authority for believing this to be the case. The Bible is full of moral instruction, addressed to all, and adapted to every situation in life. It does not appear to have been necessary that there should be a revelation of the Divine will, with regard to the resources of the earth, or the pursuits of science in the discovery of natural laws. Man had a sufficient stimulus in his animal wants, to direct him to the use of his intellectual faculties in this extensive and important sphere. But along with his animal wants and propensities he had bestowed upon him a higher class of feelings or sentiments, most influential in directing his conduct in this world, and adapted for being wrought in with his destiny in the world to come. It is to this class of sentiments that the revealed will of God, so far as relates to human conduct and the obligations of man to man, is especially directed, with a simplicity which renders it intelligible to the meanest understanding—with a power and a sublimity which give dignity to every faculty of the human soul, as bearing intimate relation to what we believe to be the attributes of Deity itself.

It is an advantage which cannot be too highly esteemed, that, in the moral instruction of children, we are supported throughout by Scripture. There is no moral precept necessary to be inculcated, but we find it there. The very language of Scripture, too, has a charm for the ear of childhood; and when we would enforce a moral truth, we know of no other by which it can at once be so forcibly, so correctly, and so agreeably expressed.

Such being the case, it is difficult to imagine why so many religious persons shrink from the idea of making moral training a distinct part of the business of education.

They tell us that no system of moral training *can*, with propriety, be carried on independently of religion. Independently of religious creeds, it certainly may ; but if, independently of religion, means, without reference to the word, the will, and the works of God, far be it from any one, however deeply interested in the subject of moral improvement, to lift a finger, even to point out the most perfect walk on earth, if to such direction conditions so awfully repugnant should be affixed. So far from my own wishes would be such a system of education, that I would rather be one to welcome in that brighter day, when all instruction, both in science and philosophy, shall be made conducive to the one great end of magnifying the glory of God throughout his whole universe, and recognising his wisdom and goodness in the minutest, as well as the most stupendous, creations of his power.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOCIAL INFLUENCES.

IN the same proportion as the love of self, and the desire for mastery and pre-eminence, may be regarded as the general tendency of boyish character, vanity, or the love of admiration, may be considered as the prevailing characteristic of girls.

This tendency of disposition is by no means confined in its operation to the subject of dress, or personal attractions ; it may vary on the side of evil, through all the gradations of envy, jealousy, competition in what is not worth contending for ; it may practise what is absurd or mean, or actually wrong, because it possesses some recommendation

in the eyes of others ; and it may display itself in extravagance, or inordinate indulgence in what a higher principle would forbid.

The operation of this tendency of disposition may lean towards what is good, by inducing a desire to be amiable and agreeable to others, and thus to adopt such habits as are generally considered lovely and attractive ; to a studious care not to wound, unnecessarily, the feelings of any, but to seek to win affection by cultivating feelings of a similar kind, and by being always prepared for the interchange of offices of civility and kindness.

Although inordinate vanity, and its natural attendants, envy and jealousy, have, in all probability, been the cause of more misery to woman,—have led to more contemptible meanness and egregious folly, as well as to more just remorse, and to more wickedness, and even cruelty, than any other feeling incident to human nature,—there is still something in the favorable development of this tendency, so essential to the true loveliness of woman's character, that it becomes, from these two opposing causes, a subject of the deepest importance when considered as a moral agent, at work, either for good or evil, for happiness or misery.

Lest the reader should be alarmed at the idea of vanity in any form being an agent for good, let us, for a moment, look again at the meaning of the word, as here used, in order to a better understanding of the subject altogether. Vanity, as already stated, may be a love of approbation—a love of being beloved ; and when we reflect upon what would be the character of a woman entirely destitute of this tendency, we see at once, that, call it by what name we may, the tendency itself is of extreme importance as a part of female character ; for a woman wholly indifferent as to whether she gave pleasure or not,—who, sufficient

of herself, could stand alone without affection from others, and feel neither solitude nor isolation, would be very likely to enjoy that solitude uninterrupted either by admiration, sympathy, or love.

So far as the education and habits of ladies in the higher ranks of society are formed upon principle, it is the principle of being, saying, and doing, what is agreeable to others ; and hence the origin of all those laws which regulate the manners and conduct of ladies of acknowledged good breeding. If, however, among the common amusements, pursuits, and avocations of men, an excessive selfishness is at work in such a manner as to add nothing to the general good,—it is no less evident, that in the experience of woman there is an excessive vanity, equally active, but by no means directed in its operation towards what is most worthy of being admired.

Appearing in this form, vanity falls under just and severe condemnation ; and under this form alone it has so generally been considered, that the idea of turning such a thing as vanity to any good account, is at once startling and repugnant to minds unaccustomed to the study of human nature. Looking at vanity under this form alone, and passing over all those little embellishments and amenities of life which owe their existence to this feeling, well-meaning but ignorant moralists have set themselves to root out vanity from the constitution altogether. With this view they have stopped its natural course, and it has found for itself other channels ; they have punished it, and it has grown beneath their hands ; they have made a jest of it in one garb, and it has quickly assumed another ; they have inveighed against it abroad, and it has seated itself at their own tables ; they have preached it down from the pulpit, and it has risen up in every pew. In short, they have tried every expedient, and strained every effort, to exter-

minate vanity, and it still lives and flourishes among us, evincing no symptoms of diminution or decay.

Indeed, how should it—when the whole character of the world we live in, the habits of society, the productions of art, and the purposes for which wealth is generally valued, exhibit uniformly the same desire to gratify vanity, in one form or another? A single walk along any of the principal streets of our towns, or cities, might be sufficient to convince us, that to put down vanity would be to destroy the occupation of the shopkeeper, the manufacturer, and the artisan. A single evening spent in society, even amongst those by whom the pomps and the vanities of the world are professedly renounced, might be sufficient to prove, that a very considerable exception is made with regard to dress, furniture, or general style of living. But it would be idle to attempt to trace out the excess to which vanity is really indulged amongst all ranks and classes of society, whatever may be their profession; for there may be as strong a desire to stand well in the opinion of others, lurking beneath the simplest habiliments, as outwardly exhibited in the most elaborate costume.

The cure of this evil, wherever it is one, will never be effected by attacking it in its full-grown and vigorous state; and we are too hard upon youth, circumstanced as it now is, to require of any one taught, trained, educated, ushered into society, and treated as young ladies generally are treated there, that they should be exempt from the feeling of vanity, whether mortified or indulged. The very fact that woman from early childhood is unavoidably surrounded by circumstances tending directly to call into exercise the prevailing tendency of her natural character, ought to stimulate our endeavors to bring into at least *equal* exercise those higher sentiments of human nature which would tend to retard the overgrowth of vanity, to control it sexercise,

and to confine the feeling itself to its proper place in the intercourse of social life.

It is too much our custom, in attempting to give a right bias to the mind of youth, to speak in direct opposition to those facts which are written in legible characters upon the whole aspect of society, and not unfrequently at the very same time exemplified in our own conduct. A young lady who is strongly advised against the indulgence of vanity, who is warned of its dangers, and admonished of its evil nature, may be quick enough to observe, that almost every thing around her bears direct and evident relation to the supreme importance of being admired—that to be admired, either in themselves, their dress, their furniture, or any other of their possessions, is in reality the great business of life with a large portion of the community—that the largest sums and most extravagant prices paid by many of her friends, and perhaps by her own parents, are for things to be admired; and that in her own education the same principle is carried out to the extent of affixing the greatest amount of attention, time, trouble, and expense, to those acquirements for which she can assign no possible use but that of rendering her an object of higher admiration.

In all these acquirements, and especially in music and painting, it is the real artist alone, who is so lost in love and admiration of her art, as to be entirely forgetful of herself. The true genius can sing as the bird sings, and hear nothing, and feel nothing, but the thrill of her own melody. It is the mere performer who calculates upon *effect*, and who is unable to utter a note, or to touch a key, without a sensation of personal identity with the sounds produced. The same may be said of all those accomplishments which are studied as mere drawing-room embellishments, consequently as means of attracting attention and

admiration ; and to these, how important a place is now assigned in female education, it is unnecessary to inquire. Neither are these observations in the present instance made with any other view, than to show that a young lady endowed even in a moderate degree with the common sentiments and feelings of human nature, and with vanity amongst the rest, has in reality no choice under ordinary circumstances of being otherwise than vain, according to the degree in which her natural tendencies of character may point that way. Hence follows that false estimate attached to things of mere external ornament—that *practical* preference given to mere embellishment of person, and general style of living, as well as to articles of property, and titles of distinction, above those sterling qualities which belong to moral worth.

Since then, in attempting to prevent the operation of vanity through its accustomed channels, we must not only change the moral tone, and the habits of society altogether, but even stop our busy looms, and destroy the beautiful fabrics of the manufacturer, as well as the ingenious designs of the artist, and the laborious industry of the mechanic ; suppose we should unitedly determine to let the subject of vanity alone altogether, trusting to the circumstances of society for its support and continuance, so far as it is capable of being an agent for good : then as regards the evil it has done, and is doing every day, suppose we should endeavor to counteract this, by bringing into constant, healthy, and efficient exercise, those nobler sentiments of human nature which are capable of throwing mere personal vanity, with all its littleness and folly, effectually into shade.

We shall never be able by our utmost endeavors to keep the soil we are anxious to plant with useful and valuable trees, entirely free from all vegetation beneath. So long

as the soil retains its numerous elements of hidden life, so long as the sun shines, the dews fall, and the rain descends, some weeds will spring up and show themselves above the surface. But once let the trees of the forest gain ascendancy, their aspiring trunks shoot upwards to the sky, and their noble branches overshadow the earth, and the weeds, if they do not cease to exist, will shrink into comparative insignificance, so as no longer to call forth anxiety, or even to attract attention to their growth.

Under the master-working of the loftier sentiments, in connection with a high degree of intellectual cultivation; and both being assisted in their right exercise by an equal cultivation of the powers of reflection and judgment, with these altogether overruled by religious principle, and rendered subservient to the aims and objects of the Christian's life; there would remain but a very humble and contracted field for the growth and exercise of vanity, and to this we might consign it with far more safety than has so long attended our endeavors to uproot it altogether from the constitution of the human mind.

With regard to the higher classes of society, education can do little towards a better adjustment of the ideas of importance and value as at present attached to different attributes of moral character, until parents, and especially mothers, can be brought to see these subjects in a truer light. Education cannot enforce that systematic attention to the formation of character for which the attainment of accomplishments leaves no time; but there remains a large portion of the community not altogether beyond the reach of our earnest efforts, if consistently directed towards their moral reformation; and to this we must first look for the happy effects of endeavors which cannot be begun too soon. Such, however, is the force of long-existing habits, and modes of thinking and acting, that for the present it is

greatly to be feared we must only look to those whose education is left entirely in our hands; and if, among these, we can raise the moral tone of feeling; if we can render the wife of the laboring man more vain of her clean house, and more anxious to display the fruits of her honest industry, than she ever was to flaunt her ribands in the street; if we can render the poor girl more careful to preserve her unsullied character, than to adorn her person; if we can make both of them believe that economy and independence, just and ready payments, and the spirit that would rather work than beg, are all more honorable, and more to be admired, than any thing which money could procure for them, even if they possessed their master's well-filled purse, we shall not be idle workers for their benefit, nor for that of the community at large.

In asking how this could be accomplished, the answer has hitherto been—"by admitting the poor girl to the advantages of education;" and schools for this purpose have been established and maintained at a vast expenditure of money, and of noble effort. To a certain extent these schools have done well; and when the personal influence of the mistress has been good, they have been productive of beneficial results in an improved moral feeling among the pupils. In many instances, however, this is far from being the case; and considering the numbers who have now been brought under the instruction of these schools, the moral effects, as exhibited in the habits of girls and women of this class, are lamentably defective. And still we are told, that if the daughters of our working people should grow up bold, dishonest, or unprincipled women, it can only be because our schools are not sufficiently numerous.

But let us look again a little into the nature of these schools, and see, where they do exist, and operate upon

the public mind, how it is that so much reading, writing, and arithmetic does not make the children who receive these blessings, more peaceable, more honest, more trustworthy, in short, more *moral* than they are.

The little girl when first sent off to school by her parents, goes, no doubt, with the idea which those parents generally entertain, that, if not absolutely doing a favor to the parties interested in her education, she is yet doing something expressly to please them, by making her appearance at the school, and something expressly to vex them if she keeps away. There are often rival schools, too, in our rural districts; and nothing can produce a worse effect upon the moral feeling of the parents, than the threats and other efforts sometimes used to detain their children from one establishment, and to prevent them going to another. It would seem scarcely possible that any right-minded persons should so far forget the real interests of the working-people, their own dignity, and the relative position of the two parties, as to condescend to the use of these and similar means; yet such is well known to be not unfrequently the case, where the low desire of swelling the numbers of a party takes precedence of all higher calculations.

Thus prepared, then, the little girl sets out to school. She meets with numbers of her familiar companions there, and, pleased as she might be to join with them in the gossip or the frolic of the passing moment, there is an imposing effect produced by the size, the order, and the general arrangements of the schoolroom, which occupies her attention, and disposes her to be quiet and sedate, so long as she sees that others are the same. But the first operation of that process, which is to reform the world, commences, and she must take her place, as one of a class, to be taught, or, in other words, to be domineered over, by

a girl not much older, and very little wiser, than herself. This girl, who is a monitor, she may possibly know very well at home, and it is equally possible that she may know her to be, out of school-hours, no better, in her moral conduct, than the most ignorant child in the whole school; yet, here she is, set up above her fellows—the tyrant-mistress, for the time being, of a whole class. Not very well acquainted herself with the lessons she is teaching, she makes frequent and troublesome mistakes, which confuse the class, and agitate her own mind. She knits her brow, speaks angrily, shouts—almost screams, to those who do not answer quickly—and sometimes has recourse to threats, and even blows. But the grand strife is about the change of places. Our little girl has discovered, that by close attention, and quick answers, she can rise above her chance companions, and occupy a place of honor, envied by the rest. No matter what friendships intervene, nor what characters, less influenced than hers by the direct love of self-exaltation, stand above her now. Her eager eye is fixed upon that place of honor, and *there* she means to be.

But, amidst all the confusion of teaching carried on by one who needs to be taught herself, the mere verbal knowledge thus communicated, and the veritable *cross*-questions and *crooked* answers thus plying backwards and forwards, between the little mistress and her class, the squabbles about taking places occupy the most eager, to the exclusion of every other thought, as may be often ascertained by the quick snatching guesses, thrown out with no other aim than that of a bare chance of standing first. Often, too, the answers slip their proper questions, and gain or lose a step; so that, although both question and answer may be perfectly correct according to the book, they do not fit each other. As, for instance, “What is a chamois-

hunter?" "An animal like a goat." No notice, however, is taken of this mistake, except to hook the answer upon the right question—no explanation of what a hunter is, or even a goat. Indeed, how should the child explain, in all probability herself as profoundly ignorant as any of her class? or, if she should happen so far to venture out of the accustomed beaten track, ten chances to one but her attempted explanation would be more puzzling than the simple statement in the book.

These blunders, however, as belonging to the intellectual department, are not so much the objects of our present care, as the moral feeling awakened wherever such a process of instruction is carried on; and when we watch the process carefully, and listen to the tones of those young voices, accompanied by expressions of the countenance, at which a mother well might stand appalled, could she discern the whole amount of mischief that was going on; when we consider the natural—the almost *necessary* abuse of power, when vested in such hands, and the rebellious spirit as naturally rising up beneath it, each individual upon whom it operates being prepared, when her turn shall come, to act the monitor—to domineer, shout, scream, push, threaten, and even strike, as she herself has been domineered over, shouted to, and screamed at, pushed, threatened, and struck—when we consider all this, and that such is in reality the under-working of our natural feelings, when not more wisely governed, we must surely cease to wonder that our present systems of popular education do not produce a more softening and humanizing effect upon the people at large.

But, beyond all this, our little girl discovers that there are premiums offered for proficiency in the different branches of instruction carried on. She finds there are so many tickets given for so many lessons duly said, and

that so many tickets will obtain for her a prize, which prize will again distinguish her above the rest, and make her an object of envy to the whole school. No matter to her what poor children are kept back from school by the express requirement of their parents, and thus lose their tickets while she makes sure of hers—no matter what dull intellects are laboring on with equal industry, but less success, than hers; her eager grasping hopes are fixed upon the tickets, and the prize, and these she makes her own. It is a grand day, too—that on which her triumph is completed. There is a public examination, and ladies and gentlemen are present to see that she stands first; and, what is more, to see her bear away the trophy in which her vanity exults. And thus end the whole series of the most favorable auspices under which a poor girl is ushered into the world, from one of our public schools for the working people.

It is not presumed that this little girl must, of *necessity*, be either selfish or vain. All that is attempted, is to show, that if either selfishness or vanity form any portion of her character, no surer means could well be devised for calling them into prominent and vigorous exercise.

But there is a very serious view of the case which follows after this. We know that the gratification of vanity is woman's strong temptation; that out of "the wounds of her vanity" arise more than half the unamiable thoughts, words, and acts of which she is ever guilty. We know, too, that the great snare of the poor girl, when she leaves her parent's roof, or even long before she leaves it, is her love of dress, and her desire to look as charming as she can. We are told, that in our schools this inclination is put down by not allowing flowers, in some instances; in others, by cutting short the hair; and, in all, by lecturing upon the evils and the dangers of dress.

Is it possible any enlightened man or woman can believe that vanity, inherent in the human mind, can be eradicated by a process such as we have just been considering? As well might a gardener declare he had done every thing to eradicate a plant of noxious growth, because he had carefully nipped off the highest bud of each leading branch, while, at the root, he was digging, and watering, and enriching the soil by every means he could devise. We have seen that the whole process by which the little girl was led onward in her school-attainments, was one of stimulated vanity and self-love. She has lost, too—by that other hardening process under which she was first subjected to tyranny, and then became a tyrant herself—much of her softness and sweetness of character. She has learned to domineer, to contradict, to order, and to strike; and, in the practice of these accomplishments, we know that like begets like—that rude and angry tones of voice call forth the same in reply; and we know also, that these and other passionate and pettish means, are always resorted to by those who exercise direct authority without understanding the great secret of moral influence. Authority, then, vested in the person of a young and ignorant child, is an agent of much evil, both as relates to the party exercising it, and the party upon which it operates.

Our little girl has now forgotten what it was to be timid, doubtful of herself, retiring, and modest. She comes forward with confidence, speaks loudly and confidently, assumes the tone and attitude of mastery; and as to her vanity, having tasted all the sweets of its highest indulgence, what is now to hinder her, so soon as she possesses money of her own, from spending it in the indulgence of the same vanity some other way? Thrown upon the world as society is now constituted, I would ask—by how many degrees is such a young girl more safe, for all her spelling,

reading, writing, and arithmetic—for the honor she obtained at school, or for the prize she bore away on that triumphant day?

Looking attentively at her situation, thus prepared for the world, and considering that, although she has been taught to read the Bible, yet, as in at least nine cases out of ten, the spirit of the Bible has not touched her heart; we have now to consider, next, in what form temptation most frequently assails the heart of woman. From the Queen upon her throne, to the humblest orphan in a workhouse, it is through the flattery of the tempter, and through that deepest of all flatteries, the hope—the promise, of being beloved. Trusting to this promise, the orphan in the workhouse is no longer poor, no longer without friends, outcast, and desolate—believing in this promise, the Queen upon her throne has more than regal glory wherewith to bind her brow.

But what, let us ask, in the whole process of the education of our little girl, has prepared her to withstand this great temptation, if it should assail her from an injurious source—if it should be mixed with poison, rather than fraught with that true sweetness which she may safely lay as a flattering unction to her heart? The precepts of the Bible, and the occasional admonitions of her governess, are, in all probability, the only means which have reached her, at all adapted to bear upon that particular part of her character which is most easily assailed by the temptations of flattery. Without undervaluing either, but especially the former, it is sufficiently evident to every impartial observer, that the rapid wholesale manner in which scripture-truths are, for the most part, dealt with in our public schools, without explanation, and, above all, without being illustrated by familiar and parallel cases, is calculated to produce no moral effect whatever upon the youthful mind.

Although the method of teaching the Scriptures, in these schools, has, of late years, been much more attended to, and, consequently, improved—so far as relates to the history of the world, the advent and office of the Saviour, and all those leading facts which constitute the foundation of the Christian's faith—yet the simple moral instruction of the Bible is still neglected ; and until some means shall be adopted for impressing this more forcibly upon the minds of the rising generation, we shall have to confess that the moral degradation of our people puts to shame our boasted institutions for their good.

I have said that the only means of correction brought to bear upon the vanity and self-love of our little girl, have been the precepts of the Bible occasionally read, and the admonitions of her governess occasionally extended to her. Thus much, then, on the right side ; but what has all the while been operating on the other ? for here lies the secret of education—that that which supplies the greatest number of agreeable motives for action ; that which promises the greatest amount of apparent good ; and that which, thus provided with ends and means, is daily and constantly producing the greatest number of impressions upon the growing mind, is in reality *forming the character of the child*, whatever we may be doing in our schools.

Here then we behold an influence in operation, far deeper and stronger in its nature, and far more incessant in its application, than any mere *telling* what is right can possibly be, while these agents are at work ; and the fact that they are so busily at work in our streets, and our houses, in our shops, and our places of public resort, and in all the social intercourse which brings the trifling and the vain together, ought long ago to have aroused us from the fatal dream in which we have indulged, while believing that

our educational systems were in their *nature* all that the wants of the people required.

Perhaps a slight comparison betwixt the habits of our own people, and those of a neighboring country, will better illustrate what is intended to be proved, on the subject of vanity as exhibited by our female servants, and women generally in that rank of life with whom, alone, it appears to be considered that excessive dressing is at all a sin.

It is impossible for an English person to live much in France, without being struck with the superior good taste of the women of that country as regards their dress. In particular, we admire and extol that of the peasantry, who adopt a costume of their own, which is admirably adapted by its form and texture for the occupations in which they are generally so industriously engaged. One thing above all others is peculiarly striking—that no shabby finery is to be found amongst them. Even in the case of female servants, such a thing as a tawdry bonnet with the cast-off ribands of her mistress is unknown. In short, they are guiltless of the wish or the attempt to imitate their superiors in station, in the style of their dress. They have a costume of their own with which they are better satisfied, which suits them better in itself; and there is nothing by which they would probably bring upon themselves more ridicule, than by deviating, like the English, from this sound principle of good taste, as well as common sense.

Of course I am speaking of the people generally, and in such remarks must exclude Paris, which is too much the centre of the world, as regards all subjects of this description, to be considered as representing France alone in the habits and customs of its inhabitants.

On the first view of this subject, we eagerly exclaim—“How superior are the poor women of France to that foolish vanity which so often leads to the frightful disfig-

urement of ours, as well as to the emptying of their purses, and the ruin of their husbands, and themselves !” But are the poor women of France in reality less vain ? By no means. Witness many a lovely brow with bands of silken hair so carefully smoothed down ; and, instead of a grisly bonnet, many a neat cap, as white as driven snow, with border never ruffled—witness many a scarlet hood, so tastefully arranged, or kerchief with its rich but always well-contrasted colors, tied around the head as if with Grecian skill—witness a thousand little arts, but all in perfect keeping with the place and circumstances of the wearer—all appropriate, and never tending to destroy that suitable distinction betwixt the mistress and the maid which gives a dignity to both.

This simple and familiar instance is brought forward only for the purpose of showing that natural vanity, without being eradicated, may be directed into channels which render it much less injurious to the good of the community at large, than it is found to be amongst our female servants, and workwomen generally, who appear to be peculiarly deficient in what is called good taste ; and who, consequently, rush upon any expedient that presents itself for the gratification of their vanity, without considering the gross absurdity of such indulgence of a misplaced ambition, where it leads them to ape the outward representation of those whom they never, in any other respect, can hope to be like.

Instead, then, of eradicating this natural tendency to vanity, or *love of approbation*, for such it may easily be made—instead of violently attacking it in its vigorous growth and fruitfulness, after its roots have struck deep, and its branches have overshadowed more important plants, we should study its lawful use and wise direction in very early life ; and above all, we should endeavor to fortify

the character against all excessive indulgence in this gratification, by sound moral views with regard to higher principles, and nobler motives for action—principles and motives which, if rightly exercised, are not only capable of producing higher enjoyment than ever was derived from vanity indulged, but of preserving from that endless train of miseries and mortifications which so often constitute the bitterness of woman's lot.

But to return to the little girl with whose simple history we began. It is but too evident that her experience at school has not been of a softening, harmonizing nature—that she has lost the bloom, if we may so call it, of her early life. And thus, even amongst those who have enjoyed the benefit of being educated in our public schools, there are not a few of the female scholars, who, with all the disadvantages of a bad home-training, become vain, idle, extravagant, and quarrelsome women. We see them standing at their cottage-doors, looking out for any amusement which chance may throw in their way; we hear them screaming to their children; we look into their houses, and wonder at their discomfort, improvidence, and waste. In times of scarcity and trial, we hear of them being detected in acts of dishonesty, and soliciting charity under false pretences; we know not whom to believe; and, looking around upon all this, and considering what its influence must be on the minds of children trained up to such practices, we propose, as a panacea for all these evils, that the rising generation shall have more reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic, than their parents have enjoyed.

Say the best we can of the little girl who obtained the first prize at the examination, hers is a low style of moral character; her conduct, though it may be decent and orderly, is influenced by low motives. She has, in fact, no knowledge or conception of any other. To please her

governess, and the ladies connected with the school, is without doubt a laudable desire ; but it is not, after all, a safe foundation upon which to build—it will not sustain her through a life of temptation, in which, to do what is strictly right, is too often to offend.

Contrasted with such a character, we see distinctly how great would be the superiority of one, who, with the same, or even a smaller amount of general knowledge, had clear perceptions of the requirements of moral obligation, and who habitually submitted her own actions to this test. I am not, of course, presuming to build upon such a foundation as any ground of satisfaction beyond the present life. I would be considered as speaking of woman in her temporal condition alone ; and even as such, I am not afraid to repeat, that there is in the development of individual character, in the discharge of social duties, and in the exercise of high and noble sentiments, an immense difference betwixt those who have had their intellectual faculties alone brought under cultivation, and those who have also had their moral faculties called into exercise, and properly directed in their use in early life.

I believe, too, that under such training we should soon behold that beauty in the female character, which there is much in the present aspect of society to make us look upon as purely fabulous. It is not the graces and accomplishments of life that are wanting. These are progressing every day. It is, that, along with these, we want more of the firmness of the Spartan mother, who had no welcome in her heart or home for the son who should return dishonored—more earnestness of purpose, more directness in the love and the practice of truth—more daring to *be* what the conscience and the judgment approve—in short, more dignity and more purity of character combined.

Nor is this all. With the strength, we want the *beauty* of the moral character. We want more open and practical acknowledgment of those deep principles which lie at the foundation of man's real life—more outward manifestations of an inward sense—more of that music in our daily walk, which is but the echo of a soul in harmony with itself, with nature, and with God. All this we would reverently acknowledge never can be found without religion; but why should we learn to be satisfied with a religion, in which these elements of moral being form no part?

CHAPTER IX.

CLAIMS OF THE POOR.

THE purity of untrodden snow is an emblem of innocence familiar to every poetic mind; and though, speaking literally, we may find but little in this world to bear the description of perfect purity, yet, as a field of freshly-fallen snow, stretching along the valley, or up the mountain side, where step of pilgrim traveller has never been, nor wandering herds have trod, nor bounding chamois left its footprints on the silver waste—as such a field of snow is *pure*, compared with that which lies amongst the busy haunts of men; so is the mind of infancy a spotless and unsullied page, compared with that on which the world has written the dark history of its evil ways.

Who is there cold enough to contemplate the face of childhood without an anxious longing to ward off, if that were possible, the first sad stain? It is, in fact, this first destruction of the bloom of life which constitutes the

pathos of our history ; and poetry and music know no strains so plaintive, as those which tell of the first link broken from a golden chain. The rain which beats upon the bosom of the lily—the touch of the rude hand that crushes the butterfly's downy wing—the storm that breaks the gentle waving of the standing corn—the frosts of autumn, when they strip the verdant bough—are emblems of that first sad blight which sin and sorrow bring upon the heart. They are emblems too true ; for as the broken flower can never bloom again, nor trodden snow resume its perfect whiteness, so the deeper stains of evil leave a mark which nothing can efface. We know—and blessed is the page on which that truth stands prominent !—that, in the sight of God, the fallen one may be restored, the guilty one made pure ; but, as regards the guilty one himself, the memory of sin is ever present, with all the dark polluting streams which it poured upon his soul. He who has run a long career of wickedness can never be again like the young child, with bosom spotless as the snow.

Without, however, speaking of the innocence of childhood in any other language than that of poetical allusion, we must allow that there is something in the guileless truth, the purity, the trustingness of childhood—its unacquaintance with the vices of the world, with its artful plausibilities, and with all the hardening processes to which the heart becomes subjected in its worldly trials—we must allow that there is something in all this more precious than the wealth for which it is too often sacrificed ; and although we know it is impossible to keep the innocence of childhood, along with the wisdom of riper years, yet there are *degrees* of purity which it is most important that we should give our best attention to the duty of preserving, and which, by the right use of rational means, and with a

blessing on our efforts, there is little doubt but we might, in most instances, preserve.

With regard to female character, especially, it is most important that guilt should never be incurred, because there is this peculiarity in the constitution of the mind of woman—that, having lost the good opinion of the world, she acknowledges no motive sufficient for endeavoring to regain her own. In fact, the world is well agreed upon this point, that a high moral standard is absolutely necessary for women, whatever it may be for men; and scarcely the most reckless of the latter class, scarcely the most depraved or unprincipled himself, would consent to any regulation of the moral code, that would be likely to render women generally more degraded. Even to such individuals, as to all, there is a beauty in the character of an innocent young girl which nothing else upon this earth can equal. No matter where—in what station, or what place, this beauty is displayed: its influence is the same in all. And such, from ancient times, its influence has ever been—so deeply felt, so universally acknowledged, that even the hungry lion has been said, by poets, to pause in his career of blood, at once struck down and rendered powerless by the soft earnest gaze of young, and innocent, and guileless woman.

Whatever tends to impair this innocence in woman, to cast suspicion on her smile, or make her purity a jest; whatever throws a shadow, however slight, upon her name, *that* is the rain which beats upon the bosom of the lily—the rude, ungentle hand which crushes the light butterfly—the storm which levels to the ground the golden grain—the frost of autumn, which steals upon the summer flower; *that* is the first blight, after the touch of which she can never be the same again.

The many superior advantages enjoyed by the higher

ranks of society, and especially by women of this class, in comparison with those of the more industrious and more humble portion of the community, are peculiarly calculated to bring the kind hearts which beat within this privileged circle into close sympathy with hearts by nature as kindly toned, among the poor and the unprotected ; where the innocence of the young girl is not less lovely, nor her purity less precious, than those of the titled beauty, when she first steps forth into an admiring world.

For the poor working girl, then, we would ask a moment's kind attention ; and first let us regard her in her childish helplessness. What spectacle is more affecting than that of the laborer's little daughter, introduced so early into her mother's toils and cares—almost herself a little mother, in the thought she has to exercise, and in her actual labor for the family at home. Behold her at her father's hearth, a weary drudge ; behold her in the street, a plaything for rude boys ; behold her in the lanes or fields, she is dragging her little brothers and sisters by the hand, or carrying one who is almost as heavy as herself ; behold her at service, she is the recipient of many a hard word, if not of many a blow, and even at best is perpetually blamed for not knowing what she never has been taught ; behold her wherever her lot may be cast, it is one of severity and hardship ; but that is nothing, if she can only keep her innocence, her modesty, her truth.

Without wishing, or presuming to cast a shade upon the many kind endeavors made, in the way of public institutions, for the protection of young women of this class ; without depreciating the value of the *good advice* so frequently extended to them, it is impossible to suppress the inquiry, "And is this all?" while considering the moral wants and claims of this interesting portion of the community. It may be asked in reply to this inquiry, "What

more is possible?" I answer,—a great deal, with those who have the power of *influence* at their command. A great deal might be accomplished by that influence being thrown into such channels, as would operate directly upon the tone of moral feeling pervading those whose means of living are dependent upon the powerful and the rich. Many ladies have influence of a far higher kind, as well ; but all have this, proportioned to their property ; and even through this, inferior as it is, a vast amount of good might be effected.

But leaving this view of the subject to be considered more fully in its proper place, we will return to the little daughter of the working man, who, if she can but keep her modesty, her innocence, and her truth, by being fortified from within by a strong feeling of the supreme dignity and beauty of a virtuous character, may pass as safely through the crowded streets, as the child whose wealthy father allows her not to appear without protection by her side, or attendants in her train. Not all the punishments inflicted by the severest law, upon the rude aggressor against the peace of the poor man's child, would prove so powerful for her preservation in the ordinary walks of life, as the consciousness within her own young heart, that industry, integrity, purity, and virtue, are the most precious ornaments with which a poor girl can be adorned. Believing this, she turns a deaf ear to the flattery which assails her personal attractions alone ; and, earnest in her occupations, whatever they may be, she escapes one half, if not the whole, of those temptations which beset the idle and the vain, whose minds have never been impressed with the nature or importance of true moral worth.

The consideration of how few, how very few poor girls go forth into the world thus fortified, is not more melancholy, than that of the temptations which on every hand

assail them, unprepared, as they too frequently are, by any previous thought or feeling of the value of their own characters, as honest, creditable, and virtuous girls, or of the immensity of their loss in sacrificing even the smallest portion of their title to an honorable name.

Glancing but slightly, as perhaps is best, at the dark catalogue of treachery and crime which mark the downfall of the unprotected of this class; and which, simply because they are unprotected, pursue them with a meanness and a cruelty bearing no comparison in its enormity with any other meanness and cruelty practised on the earth; passing by the gloomy features of this dark picture, which an active benevolence is also attempting to bring to light, in the hope of establishing some claim to the pity and protection of the public on behalf of the helpless and deceived; it cannot be denied, that this is an aspect of human life peculiarly demanding a just exercise of moral principle, in order to avert the dreadful consequences of our long neglect.

Let us compare for an instant the situation of the innocent young girl, with that of her whom some of our benevolent institutions receive, when every other home of peace and safety has closed its doors upon her. All honor to the yearning hearts of the kind Christian mothers—of the intelligent and influential ladies, who cannot let the case of the abandoned one pass unattended to—who cannot sleep in peace without doing something to provide a shelter for the houseless head; and who, consequently, at great cost of time and effort, and still more of feeling, carry on the noble work of protecting and endeavoring to reclaim all such, who, having wandered from the path of virtue, are anxious to return.

It is impossible to speak in terms of sufficient gratitude and admiration of those benevolent individuals who engage

in this good and patient work, whatever their rank or situation in life may be. Whether they have the tender heart of woman to compassionate, or the strong arm of man to protect, theirs is a work, which, in its unobtrusive quietness, in the directness of its aim, and in its pitying forbearance and self-denying energy, is beyond all praise. Society at large can never know its long-suffering, its patience, its endurance—the sacrifice of peace which it involves—or the difficulties which it presents to a delicate but earnest mind. All this, however, has been, and still is, borne with heroic firmness; and if but here and there a victim is rescued, or a repentant one restored to respectability, and friends, and home, how abundant seems the reward of all their noble efforts, to those who devote their energies to this great work of mercy!

After looking, however, at the amount of kindly feeling, high principle, and noble effort—at the patience, the devotedness, and the frequent disappointments—of these benevolent individuals, let us look at the amount of actual means of reformation, which, with all their efforts, they are able to bring to bear upon the case in question. We see, in most of our large towns, places of punishment, correction, refuge, and reformation, adapted to meet every stage and condition of this class of delinquents. These are established and conducted at great expense; there must consequently be some positive return produced by the industry of those who are received within their walls. Nothing can be better adapted to their own situation, than steady application to some active employment. Indolence would be productive of the worst consequences. It is, therefore, highly in their favor that they are compelled to work, and their employments are generally of such a description as to involve neither difficulty nor hardship. This work is, for the most part, conducted in silence, in

order to obviate the consequences arising from evil communications ; and, when we add to this, the religious exercises of morning and evening worship, conducted by a matron, or superintendent ; and the periodical visits of the ladies of the committee, with many excellent addresses, not always, however, so worded as to be intelligible to the most ignorant or degraded ; we see the whole amount of moral means which a wealthy and intelligent community have been able to apply to a class of cases, perhaps, upon the whole the most lamentable and hopeless which the history of the world records.

Bearing in mind that not only the safety, but the *reformation* of these unfortunate individuals is the high object aimed at, we are tempted to ask, what is there presented by these means, of power sufficient to bear any proportion to the necessities of the case ? What is there to inspire them with a new moral sense ? What is there to convey to them any clear idea of the real attractions of a virtuous life ? Their experience of it during what to them is, perhaps, the first experiment ever made, is marked by nothing so prominently as sewing, and silence—sewing and silence from morning till night ; or, if some are engaged in more laborious duties, it is silence still. And there they are, all silent, but their memories crowded to agony with a past which was all excitement, and which, now, in its frightful alternations of reckless extravagance and hungry want, looks, at times, even more attractive than the dead walls of the silent penitentiary.

So little, in fact, have this class of beings been previously prepared by the education of circumstances, to endure, and still less to profit by, the discipline imposed upon them, that the wonder seems rather to attach to any remaining, than to many making fatal choice of the liberty which is freely granted them, to withdraw from the protec-

tion of the penitentiary, if, after mature consideration, such is their deliberate choice. This choice, as well as every reasonable indulgence, is allowed the inmates of these establishments. They are the recipients of much kindness, and often are they seen with tears of real contrition on their cheeks—often with smiles of gratitude upon their lips, while Christian friends are talking to them, perhaps of the comforts of a long-lost home—of the precepts of a venerable parent—of the snares of a deceitful world, and of the hopes of another, where the tempter never comes. To these impressions they appear by no means insensible, so long as the excitement by which they are accompanied is kept up; but the hours of leaden silence fall heavily upon their souls again, and again they rebel against that discipline, which, by a fatal mistake, is supposed to be the only power within our reach for preserving society from this class of evils. Such are the moral means applied to the cure of that, which might, by the exercise of half the same amount of benevolent effort judiciously applied, in all probability in a vast proportion of instances have been prevented.

We are apt to forget, in the case of such persons, what has been going on under the education of circumstances. During their whole lives vice has been arraying itself to their view, in the gayest and most attractive colors. It is true they may at times have detected the gaunt figure of the skeleton amongst the guests carousing at the festive board. It is true they may at times have heard the clanking of the chains concealed beneath the gorgeous robe in which the ghost of pleasure apes a real form; but if neither the grim representation of death on the one hand, nor the danger of captivity and cruel thralldom on the other, had power to counteract the force of those attractions which vice had succeeded in presenting to their view; we may

well believe that some influence, more powerful and attractive than mere quietness and silence, would be wanted on the side of virtue, to allure them onward into a safer and a happier path.

A thoughtful observer of the moral aspect of society, acquainted with the nature and requirements of the human mind, would see at once that positive means are necessary to be put in operation, if we would hope to accomplish any great amount of good—that negative means are not sufficient—that silence is not working any *real cure*. Indeed, it is difficult to say what would ; but certainly the reading aloud of suitable books of an interesting nature, and striking in their direct moral tendency, would be one step towards improvement in the mode of discipline, and one which might easily be taken, without reducing materially the profits of the work carried on in these establishments.

After looking at the almost hopeless situation of this class of individuals, as relates to any moral cure ; after looking too at the vast amount of patient effort, perseverance, and kindly feeling, exercised on their behalf, at the expense incurred, and the painful interest awakened by their claims—and who can wish that these should be less ? who would not rather they should be more a thousand-fold ?—yet after looking at all this, let us go back, and see how little had been done for the same unfortunate beings, before the cruel blight fell upon the promise of their early years, the stain upon their once fair names. Then it was, that a little Christian kindness, a little motherly care, a little patience and forbearance, on the part of a master or a mistress, might possibly have saved them. With a little of that pity, that solicitude, that earnest thought, which pursues them in their degradation, if judiciously bestowed upon them at the time when they were still innocent, yet perhaps unprofitable, servants ; from what a gulf of

guilt and misery might they not possibly have been snatched?

How is it, then, that towards those young, undisciplined, and heedless creatures, who vex our patience in their early servitude, we have so little either of charity or forbearance, to say nothing of solicitude and forethought for their real welfare? How is it that, amongst our benevolent and Christian ladies, there are so few who will permit young girls, on first going out to service, to share the blessings of their personal influence, and maternal care? The general plea for escaping this, by no means pleasant duty, is, that family affairs do not admit of such arrangements, that young servants are troublesome to teach, that there is no time to spare for them—and a thousand other excuses, all reasonable enough in themselves, if we had nothing to answer for in this world or the next, but simply our own comfort and convenience.

Indeed, there are but few situations except the lowest, which young girls on first going out to service can obtain; and thus, during that critical period of their lives, when the character is undergoing the most important change—the transition from girlish helplessness, to womanly determination; from ignorance of all things, to knowledge of the habits of by no means the best portion of a world, consistent in little but its selfishness and eagerness about material good; at the critical time of this transition, the poor man's little daughter is generally placed out in some exposed and inferior situation, at best under the teaching of servants whose education from circumstances has been no better than her own.

It would be a sad history, could we penetrate into the secrets of these situations, and see to what the poor girl is exposed. Sent out on errands for all forgotten things, and often for things forbidden in the family, she is not only

trained to the artful management of such affairs, so as to elude detection, but even sometimes sent with a falsehood on her lips. Besides which, she is usually the scape-goat for the sins of other servants, while her dependence upon their favor for rendering her situation tolerable, or the reverse, prevents her daring to speak openly in her own defence. In addition to which, she must necessarily be the hearer of much that is objectionable; for if servants, generally, are as unprincipled as we hear it often stated that they are, what must be the training of a young girl committed entirely to their management, and let into all the secret arrangements by which they support each other in what is wrong? Even in inferior situations, where few servants are kept, or even where the little girl is alone, her circumstances are for the most part of a hardening and deteriorating character with regard to moral worth, tending rather to sharpen her perceptions of expediency, than to deepen her impressions of the value of what is honest, true, and right.

From such an education, or rather from one still worse, carried on perhaps with a cellar for a home, and a street for a playground, we cannot wonder that so many of the daughters of our working people should fall into habits of the most degrading vice; more especially, when assailed on one side by wretchedness and want, and on the other, by the flattering promises which temptation can so well adapt to the circumstances of the ignorant and unwary.

It is sufficiently evident, that the only legitimate and efficient influence exercised for the good of the poor girl, must come from her parents, and especially from her mother; and wherever the wife of a laboring man is herself a well-principled, industrious, economical, and right-minded woman, her character is sure to tell upon her family, so that her daughters may be easily distinguished by their

modesty and prudence, and by other valuable characteristics, not likely to forsake them in afterlife. In the cottages of our working people, however, it is a melancholy fact, that such mothers are seldom found; and even where they might be, under happier circumstances, they are, for the most part, called away to other occupations, in order to increase their means of living, while their children are left to take their chance at home. This must necessarily be the case, perhaps each year to a greater extent than the last, especially in our manufacturing districts; a fact which renders it more and more important, that some effective measures should be put in operation for the protection and improvement of the children of the poor.

That upward and onward tendency which marks so strongly the character of the English people, and which, if rightly directed, is so great a good, is equally capable of being a great evil, where a *false* good is made the object of attainment. Seeing the great strife which is carried on in the world around them, to obtain, possess, and exhibit to the admiration of others, whatever is beautiful, fashionable, or becoming—seeing all this in their superiors, as well as their equals, the poor girl, as well as the rich one, becomes educated by circumstances to believe, that rich and costly dress is one of the great ends for which a woman lives; and, more especially, she comes to think, that the more, in all things, she can approach to the appearance and position of a lady, the better her position will be. Under this impression, hundreds and thousands of poor girls prefer the business of a dressmaker to what they regard as the humbler duties of household labor; and the constant demand for *hands* in this department supplies a means of living, which might, under proper restrictions, be both respectable, and in a high degree comfortable, to the parties concerned. Enough, however, has been said of the abuses

which have crept into this system, to render it unnecessary to dwell much upon the subject here. But while one party are blaming the balls, and the fashionable entertainments, as the direct and sole cause of those dreadful abuses which have been dragged to light ; while another are bitter in their invectives against the mistresses of such establishments ; and while a third, with more active benevolence, are devising means for the protection of the poor needlewomen ; the case, altogether, remains almost as hopeless of cure as if it had never been taken up. Indeed, it is precisely one of those which nothing can reach, except a higher tone of moral feeling diffused amongst the people at large.

Let us think for a moment—for it is well worth the trouble—how such a tone of feeling would operate. In the first place, the lady ordering her dress for a particular time—perhaps for some public occasion—would recollect that she was a responsible being, and not merely a doll, to be decked out to the best effect, without regard to any attendant circumstances. As a responsible being, and at the same time a woman of influence, she would make it her business to inquire by what means the dressmaker would be enabled to fulfil her engagement, supposing the season to be one of general pressure, and numbers of ladies requiring the same attention as herself. We know, perfectly well, that the threat, either expressed or implied, of withdrawing her patronage, in case of the work required being executed in an inferior manner, or not punctually sent home, has a powerful effect upon the mind of the dressmaker. Suppose, then, the lady, convinced herself of the higher importance of not overworking the hands employed, should apply the same powerful stimulus to the purpose of protecting from oppression those who are unable to protect themselves, and, with this view, should

threaten, that if any of the underworkers, engaged in her service, were deprived of their necessary rest, it would be the last occasion on which the dressmaker would enjoy the favor of her countenance. Of course, after such a stipulation, a higher rate of payment would be required; and if the lady was one who considered justice and humanity towards her fellow-creatures of higher importance than a trifling sum of money, she would not object to pay for the rest and the sleep which is absolutely necessary for the health of those who engage in her service.

Thus far, a higher tone of moral feeling, on the part of the lady, may effect all the purposes of protection to the young apprentices and workwomen, whose comfort is not alone the object to be considered, but whose very lives may be said, to a certain extent, to be in her hands. But, beyond this, the dressmaker herself, if influenced by the same sense of justice and mercy, might safely declare her inability to perform that which could only be completed in the given time, at the sacrifice of a fearful amount of health and strength. It is no offence to truth, to say we *cannot* do that which could only be done by the infliction of cruelty and wrong; and this noble stand made by the dressmaker herself, would do much towards a better adjustment of the rate of payment on the part of the rich, and the amount of labor on the part of the industrious poor.

As regards this last class, also, one is tempted to think some good might be effected, by their open expression of that honest indignation against the encroachments of oppression, which every human being has a right to express. This, in the present state of things, would be expecting too much, when habits of patient submission in some, and of cringing servility in others, have been inculcated from childhood, as the best, and, indeed, the only expedient, for escaping from hunger and want; it would be expecting too

much, where actual bread, the food of the passing day, is at stake, and the delicate and feeble frame must have shelter for the night; it would be expecting too much, where the general tone and tendency of society is in favor of expediency, or the science of obtaining what is most wanted by the quickest and easiest means. It would be expecting too much, that a poor young girl, surrounded by such an atmosphere as now pervades society, should dare to lift up her voice in her own defence—should dare to do any thing, in fact, but suffer, and work, so long as her eyes and her hands retain their power.

Should such a voice, however, be raised from out of one of these hotbeds for disease and misery, we should stand, at first, astonished at so rare an act of insubordination. But, should that cry of human suffering be echoed by the thousands whose actual feeling it expressed; and could there, by any possibility, be a new impulse given to that principle of human nature, which, even in these young hearts, must rise and swell against the hardship of their lot; they would have so much of truth and justice on their side, that even the busy world would listen to their cry, and the natural consequence would be, that public shame would quickly fall upon the parties most implicated in their wrongs.

A deep lesson may be learned while contemplating the class of cases here alluded to, and especially the latter. It is, that society is now, even with the best intentions, unable to cure what it has neglected to prevent. Well and nobly did the poet, with his song of sadness, plead the cause of these poor sufferers; and well and nobly, too, have others labored for them, perhaps with more of practical effect: but what can pity do in such a case? Our pity, and our generous indignation, too, though shared with thousands of intelligent and active beings, are powerless

to effect a radical and certain cure, so complicated is the nature of the evil, so closely interwoven with the numerous threads by which society is bound together.

What then remains? Are we to go on in the same course, with these great tragedies enacting still before our eyes? By no means. There are warm young hearts committed to our trust—minds yet untutored in the wisdom of the world—high thoughts, and noble energies, and capabilities of love and kindness. Who will come and aid us in the glorious work of turning these into God's own appointed channels, so that they may flow with health and gladness, through the humblest valleys of our land, leaving a moral beauty in their track more fragrant than the blooming flowers which nature scatters there—more fruitful than the golden harvests which man's industry procures?

CHAPTER X.

EDUCATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

THERE are few words in the English language respecting which so great a diversity of opinion exists, with regard to their precise meaning, as education. In the present instance it is sufficient to speak of two different kinds of education—that of circumstances, and that of instruction as conveyed through the direct instrumentality of teachers.

The education of circumstances is that which is perpetually going on within and around us. It derives its peculiar bias, whether towards good or evil, from impressions; and it operates in the formation of character, by supplying or suggesting motives for action. So long as the mind is

capable of impression, and so long as the habits are capable of change, this education is going on, whether we desire it or not ; and so powerful is its influence in making us what we are, that the utmost expenditure of money and labor in the direct business of teaching, has often been found altogether unavailing in counteracting the effects, or averting the consequences of this kind of education.

It is a serious thought, and perhaps it would be well if it should become the subject of serious alarm, that the education of circumstances commences with the first impressions of childhood, and that such impressions often fix themselves upon the mind under no more careful or judicious superintendence than that of an inexperienced and ignorant nurse. The sports of the nursery, with all its little world of jealousy and strife—its reconciliations, its tears, and its tenderness, supply an extensive and fruitful field for the cultivation of moral character. Neither lessons nor lectures, unless applied at the precise time when they can be carried into practice, will ever be found to produce impressions of equal force with the well-timed application of discipline, at those critical moments which require both knowledge and tact to turn them to good account. These moments occur chiefly in the play-room—in the sports of the field, or the garden—or, perhaps, when the little tired one lays its head upon the downy pillow at night, and begins to think quietly about the events of the day—the justice or the injustice with which it may have been treated—the kind or the unkind words it may have heard—the generous or the ungenerous return it may have met with, for some little act of benevolence, or self-denial, which, at such times, it ponders upon,—and questions whether it shall ever repeat again.

A mother is generally thought to do much, if she undertakes the teaching of her children in the first rudiments of

scholastic knowledge ; and yet this is perhaps the only part of their education which can, with safety, be deputed to one who has not their highest interest at heart. Teaching the early branches of what is generally called school-learning, is, comparatively, a mere mechanical process—teaching the subjection of animal propensity, under the influence of moral sentiment, is a work of the most momentous import, and can only be effectually carried on by the use of right means judiciously applied to a great and noble end.

The example of those with whom children are associated, forms an important branch of the education of circumstances, and it operates in the formation of character chiefly through the medium of pleasing or painful impressions made upon the mind. Thus, a child may be carefully instructed in the duty of loving its parents, and relatives, and admonished as carefully against the evils of disobedience and disrespect ; but if the relatives do nothing better than instruct and admonish—if they fail to inspire, in their own persons, any sentiments of love or reverence—and, especially, if, in their general conduct, they are harsh and unfeeling, unreasonable in their requirements, unjust in their decisions, or regardless of integrity and truth, the best lessons of the ablest teacher will fail to inspire, in the heart of the child, those feelings which ought to be the spontaneous growth of circumstances involving close relationship, familiar intercourse, and natural affection.

The formation of moral character is much more dependent upon what is agreeable, or otherwise, in external circumstances, than is generally supposed. Thus, many well-meaning, and even excellent advisers, fail in producing the good they fondly anticipate ; nor is there any more frequent, or more painful cause of disappointment,

than that of the parent who has to regret that his excellent advice has been all thrown away. Could such parents look into the inner working of the minds of their children, they would often perceive, that kindly as their advice had been meant, kindly, too, as it possibly had been received, there had been in relation to the character of the child, a system of education carried on by circumstances, a series of impressions produced and confirmed, and a course of discipline effectually applied, of a character entirely opposed to their own wishes, and which their own mere verbal teaching had proved utterly powerless to counter-act.

A striking instance of the education, or, rather, the training of circumstances, is frequently seen in the case of an only child of indulgent parents, whose every thought is centred in its happiness. It often happens in such cases, that the parents have the greatest desire for their child to be generous and considerate towards others, and their best endeavors are used to make it willing to share its enjoyments, perhaps, with some occasional visiter, or even to resign them altogether, when they interfere with some act of kindness or duty.

Such parents do not consider that they are requiring scarcely less than an impossibility of their child; all the circumstances of its life having tended to make it, in its own person, the object of primary—indeed, of sole consideration. To a child thus situated, every event that affection could overrule, has been made to bend to its wishes, and every person has ministered to its gratification. There has been no competitor in the whole range of its indulgences: it has possessed, exulted, feasted, and enjoyed alone. Circumstances have educated it to be selfish, and nothing but the discipline of companionship with its equals in age, rank, and rights, can *re-educate* it to be sufficiently yield-

ing, generous, and considerate to others ; unless, indeed, as years advance, the child itself, becoming convinced of its deficiencies, should exert a more than common degree of moral power, so as to overcome the disadvantages of its early training.

It would, however, be extremely unfair, to look only at the discouraging aspect of the education of circumstances. When these are favorable to the right development of the physical, intellectual, and moral faculties of a child in the home of its parents, nothing can be more admirably adapted than family ties, to render it all which a benevolent Creator designed for its good—the blended affection and authority of the parent—the helplessness and natural dependence of infancy—the equal rights, and the relative claims of brothers and sisters, all tending to render effectual and complete, the discipline which nature has provided, and which only waits for the higher instrumentality of an enlightened religious faith, to render it a preparation for all that is practically good in this state of existence—for all that is eternally blessed in the world to come.

To allude to any thing like neglect of the moral training of children in private families, and especially in the families of religious parents, must, I am painfully sensible, appear like unwelcome interference with what all parents have an undoubted right to judge of for themselves ; more especially as all, from intimate knowledge, possess the best opportunity for correct judgment. It should be borne in mind, however, that general hints are widely different from private interference. But, with the profoundest respect for the practical workers in home-education, and the strongest conviction that many engaged in this work are quietly and unobtrusively making themselves acquainted with more important truths than meet the eye of the public, I would still venture to ask, if families in general con-

tain within themselves all the moral good required, why are we as we are? That grievous offences, and crying evils, do exist amongst us, there can be no manner of doubt; but, from whence do they come; or, why are they not corrected by the influence of our often-boasted homes?

Even with the best possible desire, on the part of parents, combined with the highest capabilities, how few do we meet with, who, by their own showing, possess the time and the means for educating their own children. The rich seldom dream of such an occupation being any part of their duty; those who are engaged in business, find no possible time for such a pursuit, and the poor are well known to be generally incompetent, besides being fully engaged in providing, by their labor, for the more urgent wants of every day. "Home Education," therefore—admirably as its nature and consequences have been defined, and efficiently as we know it to be carried on in some rare instances—as a general means of correcting the evils of the present state of society, is, evidently, a thing which it would be useless to consider in the light of a *practical* good. Indeed, there is reason to fear it is becoming less and less so every day. As the claims of society, and the pressure of public business, increase; as men become more and more absorbed in business, and in all kinds of money speculations; as women in one circle of society are giving more and more of their time to any amusement that leads them away from home; and, in another circle are yielding increased attention to those rapidly-advancing claims upon public charity and benevolence, which leave but little time for private duties; to what point in our moral horizon are we to look for a ray of hope, that the help so urgently required will emanate from home?

There is no word in our language to which in all proba-

bility, so many warm hearts have responded, as that of home. To the sailor on the midnight watch—the soldier on the eve of battle—the shepherd on the hills—the wearied huntsman returning from the chase—the wanderer when he asks a stranger's welcome—even the outcast and the alien, when they watch the glow of evening fires, at which there is no place for them—the prodigal upon his death-bed, where no father's voice is near—to each and all their childhood's home may be "the brightest, purest spot on memory's page;" and often, like the morning sun, forgotten in the busy noon of day, may this sweet home with all its once endeared associations, its kind and gentle influences, be brought back to vivid recollection at the sad close of a long life; for it is no mystery of the poet's art, which has invested the loved name of home with all its powerful influence over the passions and the hearts of men, though verse has never found a more prolific theme, nor music sung a more enchanting lay. If there be one thing *real* in this life, it is the influence which home has exercised upon the heart, the conduct, and the experience of mankind.

But has this powerful influence always been for good? Is it *now* exercised for good? Is it not rather narrowing down to little but a name? In fact, what is there to sustain it, with one half at least of the community? Pleasure, business, or public duties, on the one hand—public duties, morning calls, or evening parties, on the other—the hurry of innumerable occupations, all succeeded by alternations of weariness, and exhaustion; these, and many other causes, arising chiefly out of the high-pressure of a working world, have indeed gone far towards stripping its poetical associations from the sweet name of home, and with them, it is greatly to be feared, no small amount of its good influence too.

In speaking of the defective moral influence of home-training, it must still be borne in mind, that nothing bordering upon what is understood by *immorality* can be intended here. Nothing, in fact, beyond those narrow and defective views of what is right, which grow upon the mind in a low moral atmosphere ; but, more than all, those habits of neglect which are required by frequent association with a world in which a high standard is not recognised ; both which may often place the children subjected to such a rule, in as dangerous a position as where the habits of a family are more directly and positively wrong. Where, for instance, a fond but injudicious mother shrinks from speaking wholesome truths to her children, fearing to give them pain, or fearing still more, to make herself appear less kind, less lovely in their eyes. Such a mother, when her children grow up selfish, inconsiderate, and practically regardless of herself, as in all probability they will, from having had no higher motives set before them, nor better feelings called into exercise ; such a mother often has to weep the bitter tears of disappointment, while the wounded feelings which she cannot tell, or which, if she did, would not be understood, ultimately create dissatisfaction and distrust between herself and her children, altogether destructive of her influence over them, and too often of the peace of her own mind, and the happiness of her home. And all this may exist with the best possible intentions on her part, but accompanied with entire ignorance of the moral wants of her children, and consequently of the fatal mischief she has been doing.

One other instance may suffice, and it relates to the most important subject which a mother can bring before the consideration of her child. In this case, the doctrines of the Christian religion may be clearly explained, and faithfully taught, according to the limited views of an un-

enlightened believer; yet all this may be done in such a manner, and with such accompanying circumstances, that the mind of a child will receive a lasting impression of religion being a system of technicalities, or a system of mere church and chapel-going; while, in other instances, where the spirit of party reigns pre-eminent, Protestantism, by the same kind of defective and indirect teaching, may come to be regarded just as something opposed to Romanism—Dissent, to Church-of-Englandism; and so on, through all the varieties of religious education, as it *may* be carried on even in families whose conduct is most exemplary; so much so indeed, as never to be spoken of in connection with what the world calls good or bad morals.

Results, of a nature equally unsatisfactory, have followed, and are following, to a melancholy extent, that system of Scripture *teaching*, which, by a frequent mistake, is called religious education; and which satisfies too many, that while they are impressing the history of the Bible upon the mind of youth, they are in reality training up the child *in the way he should go*. “It is a serious mistake,” observes Mr. Stow, “to suppose that the reading or mere knowledge of Scripture facts, is all that is sufficient to make a good man. Scripture says, ‘knowledge puffeth up, but charity (or love) edifieth.’ It does not stand alone, like mere knowledge, but extends its efforts in every direction. Many are influenced by a sense of the stern virtue of honesty—*Thou shalt not steal*—and they would not pick their neighbor’s pocket for the world, but these same persons who reverence the words of the eighth commandment, may steal their neighbor’s good name without a pang, and be entirely unmindful of the commandment—*Be pitiful, be courteous*. They practise the sterner virtues, it may be, but make nothing of the command—‘Whatever things are honest,

lovely, and of good report, *think* on these things,' and 'do.'"

If party spirit, prejudice, and worldly-mindedness, exist in the world around us to such an extent as to frustrate much of the good which benevolence would gladly effect; and that they do so, we hear as the subject of complaint and lamentation every day; and if a low tone of moral feeling pervades the secular affairs of mankind, leading to the frequent conclusion that self-interest is a more generally predominating motive than a sense of right; these evils must originate somewhere, they must be encouraged by some parties, they must find shelter in some homes, and be cultivated by some agency: it can be of no use, therefore, to disclaim our participation in them altogether. The fact is, we are professing one thing, and acting another, in a greater or less degree throughout the whole of our social intercourse; and what is worse than all, we are deceiving ourselves by the mere act of talking in favor of one set of principles and motives, when the whole machinery of practical and daily life is influenced by motives and principles of a different, if not of an opposing nature.

Instead therefore of requiring only the very small amount of attention which has hitherto been given to the subject of moral training, to stem the tide of improvidence, folly, and vice, which is now threatening the welfare of society, we want in reality an array of attractive influence on the side of what is right, of sufficient power to work against the stream of habit; and, in short, to turn the whole tide of popular feeling.

I venture to use the word *feeling*, because whatever may be the tendency of our conversation, and even the bias of our convictions, we do not really *feel* aright, when we suffer our self-love, or our worldly interest, the customs of society, or the example of persons of distinction, to operate

upon our lives and conduct, so that we habitually regulate our actions by what is expedient, rather than by what is strictly right. We may talk well, while this is the case, and we may even think rightly, so far as to admonish others ; but, with no better standard of excellence *practically* acknowledged, it is but too evident that our feelings are in the *wrong*.

Judging, then, by what is habitually allowed in private conduct, and allowed too, when, in the case of another, it would be clearly seen to be wrong, it is not speaking too comprehensively to say that the general tone of popular feeling with regard to moral responsibility requires to be changed, before any great amount of good can be effected in the moral condition of the people.

The education of circumstances, when considered as including the habitual modes of acting—not of talking—which prevail in the world, is indeed a powerful enemy, if directed against the moral welfare of society ; but we must not forget that it is equally powerful in the opposite scale ; and if once this mighty power could be gained over to the side of virtue, in *masses* of the community, as happily it now is in the case of noble-minded individuals who stand forth like stars in our midnight gloom ; what happy consequences might we not anticipate, even if only here and there a moral garden began to be cultivated, in which all the laborers should be unitedly bound to one common cause.

At present it is greatly to be feared, that in the education of circumstances, the predominant influence is in favor of what is wrong—too often in favor of actual vice. We see the beneficial results of a long-continued line of right conduct ; but unfortunately, we do not so clearly behold the first attractions, and it is by these that the youthful mind is most frequently led. On the other hand,

every thing is effected which art can devise, to allure the unwary. Taste is consulted, variety supplied, convenience studied, self-love indulged—every thing, in short, which an intimate knowledge of the nature and wants of the human mind can suggest, is made subservient to the purposes of the world, in alluring both the young and the old to every species of indulgence in which the lowest propensities of man's nature assert their mastery over the higher.

Let us look for an instant at the situation of young men ; and as the morals of the industrious classes appear to form a subject much more open to discussion than those of the titled, or the wealthy, let us look at the situation of that numerous class now rising up, and coming forward in their turn to be masters of houses and families, and conductors of business on their own account. Let us look for an instant at the situation of apprentices and assistant workmen, during the time when their characters are undergoing the process of formation. They are, for the most part, considered and treated as little better than intruders in the family with whom they are located. The full enjoyment of all the rights for which his parents have stipulated, may, at the same time, be the young man's portion ; and yet there may be little indeed to allure him to the fireside of his master. But on the first moment of escape from the office, or the counter, if he turns his steps away, how different is the scene presented to his view ! Follow him to any of those haunts in which he meets with discontented and ambitious spirits like his own, and there he often finds himself a hero, great and glorious in the debating-room, and well for him if that were all ; but often great, too, where it would be the highest honor to be insignificant ; often happy for a moment, where it would be a greater blessing to be wretched. Such is the

situation of hundreds and thousands of those busy multitudes who throng our daily paths, with every thing to allure on the one hand, by fair but deceitful promises of enjoyment ; and often with a mere blank on the other, as to any pleasurable sensations produced by surrounding circumstances. And yet we wonder that so many youths should go astray ; and, turning a deaf ear to the admonitions of wisdom and sobriety, should rush into those scenes of excitement and excess, which have so often proved the commencement of a downward course, ending in misery and ruin.

Looking still lower in the scale of society, we see but too clearly, that the education of circumstances is nearly all which a large portion of the community receives ; and what is the nature of these circumstances, the streets of our towns and cities, and the places of favorite resort in our rural villages, too distinctly explain. In the families of the poor, where both parents are fully occupied, and often absent from home, there can be little education of any kind carried on by them, and their children are consequently left, in a great measure, to the education of the street. To such children, especially, some means of bringing them under a better system of training, would be a benefit of incalculable value. The parents themselves being ignorant of the nature of this benefit, and wholly incapable of appreciating its value, can never be looked to as the parties likely to make any effort requiring personal sacrifice, to obtain a better education for their children. The case altogether is therefore well calculated to excite serious inquiry, whether the same authority which has been called upon to interfere in protecting this class of children from the evils of excessive labor, might not be wisely and benevolently exercised in protecting them from the still greater evils of ignorance and vice.

Could the human mind be kept a perfect blank, waiting only to be filled up with what the poorest individual has happily the means of hearing from the pulpit; did the character remain stationary when not brought under direct or systematic training, we might then, with some show of reason, turn a deaf ear to the great question, whether the people *shall* be educated or not. But, unfortunately, this is so far from being the case, that the idle boy, and the neglected girl, whom we call *un-educated*—as if that were all, are both receiving, from the training and companionship of the street, an education in all respects calculated to render them disgraceful to society, and degraded in themselves. It is not, then, by leaving this portion of the family untaught, and unattended to, that we are actually leaving so many minds unoccupied, and so many characters unformed. Rather are we consigning those minds to the most false and injurious impressions from surrounding circumstances, permitting the faculties of those neglected beings to be stimulated into activity by the most unlawful motives, and allowing them, as industrious agents, to be employed in carrying on what is most prejudicial to themselves, and to society. It is, therefore, not a negative, but a positive evil, when the *right education* of the people is neglected.

In all other duties of life, except the great duty of moral education, we preserve a constant reference to the future; and upon this principle, a system of progression is carried out in what is taught, with a view to qualify for every business and profession, indeed, for every honorable and successful pursuit. In moral discipline alone, we appear to confine our attention to the present moment; and if a child has been what is called *good* to-day, we conclude it will be good to-morrow; forgetting that on the morrow or the next day, it may be associated with a different class of

circumstances, tried by new temptations, and altogether thrown unexpectedly upon motives to which it had previously been in a great degree a stranger.

To certain actions it is customary to affix certain punishments or rewards, and if these are duly executed, we consider our discipline without a fault; forgetting that the child subjected to this system, will have to be sent forth into a world in which no such punishments and rewards are known; and therefore, if it has reasoned only upon the evil of certain actions by the consequences attaching to them, where these are no longer found, it will be entirely at fault in its moral estimate of things.

We think, if we have taught a child the duty of obedience, by punishing every act of an opposite nature; and the virtue of pleasing ourselves as its lawful guardians, or governors, by rewarding its endeavors to do so, either with smiles, or other marks of approbation—if, by such means, we have taught a child to be obedient, and solicitous to please, we consider that a sure foundation of good moral character is laid; but we forget that the child is going forth into a world, in which the first act of obedience required of it may be an act which virtue and religion command it not to perform—we forget that it is going forth into a world, where, to give pleasure, even to those holding authority over it, may sometimes be to violate the laws of justice and of truth.

If the busy world in which we live deserves all, or only one half the hard things which are said of it; and if what is too often brought to light by the sudden vicissitudes of fortune, the wreck of property, the disruption of parties, and the bitterness of feeling which ensues—if what is then revealed be a fair specimen of that which is kept back, either secretly justified by custom, or openly glossed over by success, it is time, indeed, that we should bethink ourselves

of some means by which the young may be prepared—not for adapting themselves to the habits of such a world, but for resisting, calmly and unitedly, yet firmly, and even to the death, if need be, the temptations which present themselves, on every hand, to follow in the same course which those before them have pursued—temptations, not perhaps to open vice, but to those secret and sometimes plausible indulgences of a vitiated moral state, which must be, in itself—in its very being, action, and existence upon earth, an offence to God and an injury to man. When will the good, the wise, and the enlightened begin to look into these things with as much industry, intelligence, and forethought as they now employ upon the circumstances and requirements of mere physical existence?

CHAPTER XI.

EDUCATION OF SCHOOLS.

AFTER a calm inquiry into the nature of that education of circumstances, which is perpetually going on ; and a serious consideration of the frequent tendency of such education towards what is expedient, rather than what is right—towards what is productive of immediate and tangible profit, rather than a good which is incalculable, because impossible to be traced out through its innumerable channels, or measured in its extent of benefit to mankind—after looking impartially at the general state of society, as it now exists and carries on its operations, at the customs it sanctions, the habits it encourages, and the plausibilities under which its secret influences are disguised—after looking at all this, too, operating upon the poorer classes, as influence

always does from the higher to the lower, we naturally come to the inquiry—what the education of our schools is preparing as an antidote to the evils arising out of this low state of moral feeling, now so generally acknowledged in its effects, though still so little regarded in its cause.

Education is doing much in our schools, for much is required by the physical wants of the world at the present time, which continually demand an increase of effort in every sphere of knowledge, and every branch of intellectual attainment. In this way our schools are doing much, and they appear likely to do more and more. The demand for properly qualified preceptors is rapidly increasing, and colleges, or institutes, are springing up, in which the best means of instruction are concentrated, and brought to bear upon mind in the mass, so as to convey the greatest possible amount of knowledge to the greatest number of scholars in the least given time. Nothing can be more admirably adapted for this purpose than the methods of teaching adopted in some of these institutions; and if men had no moral part to perform in the world, no moral duties for which they are responsible, and no moral faculties bestowed upon them for the performance of these, nothing could be better, altogether, than the education thus conducted. Women, also, are now admitted to the privileges of this mode of instruction; and if they had to be engaged in learning all their lives, nothing could be better for them.

But, we are told, the moral government, the order, the regularity, pervading these institutions, is without a fault; and, certainly, none can have enjoyed the pleasure of a personal observation of the manner in which the whole is conducted, without being prepared heartily to subscribe to the truth of this assertion. It is, indeed, a beautiful spectacle, to witness within the walls of these institutions, so

many young faces, animated by earnest minds—strangers, and friends—neighbors, and those from a distance—all punctual to a moment, all intent upon the business in hand, and all—in addition to a vast amount of valuable knowledge—acquiring habits of attention, application, quickness of perception and thought, with an ambition stimulated by emulation, to rise higher and higher in the pursuits of learning, science, and general information. Under the teaching of the ablest preceptors, and by a systematic arrangement of every thing that is done, an amount of knowledge is thus poured into the youthful mind, of which, hundreds and thousands of intelligent beings will, no doubt, experience the benefit in afterlife, so far as their intellectual existence is concerned ; and this is necessarily so blended with their moral life, that neither set of faculties can be judiciously cultivated, without the other being, in some measure, improved. It is freely granted, then, that nothing could be more orderly, better regulated, or more entirely adapted, than some of these institutions for the purposes required. And why ? Because the pupils are doing nothing *but* learning as rapidly as they can ; and, if the whole of their lives was to be a continuation of the same process, or, if it even required the incessant application of the same faculties, *and no other*, the greatest enthusiast could demand of education no more than this.

Morning, noon, and evening, the same faculties are called into exercise—the intellectual alone ;—and such is the pressure upon these, that incessant application at home, at the close of every day, is necessary, to prepare for the business of the next. In favor of this system, it is said, that the pupils, in many instances, enjoy the advantage of the moral discipline of home ; and where this is good, and there is *time* for its application, none can doubt the benefi-

cial results it is calculated to produce. Time, however, is the great thing wanted even here.

It is with the utmost respect, both for the enlightened individuals connected with some of these institutions, as well as for the high advantages in the way of acquiring knowledge which are thus afforded, that these remarks are offered ; but earnestness in the cause of moral reformation leads to the inquiry, whether all these systems of education are not just so far defective, as they fail to bring into exercise one half of those faculties of mind which are to regulate the habits in afterlife, to supply motives and principles for consistent action, and thus to form the whole character by a process of right *feeling*, as well as *thinking*. And deep, indeed, is the regret with which these observations are accompanied, that while machinery so admirable is put in operation for cultivating to perfection all the intellectual powers, there should be no machinery of equal force applied to the moral—nay, not so much as an attempt, systematically made, by all these learned men—these public-spirited individuals—these earnest workers of all classes, and all parties, to bring even the smallest amount of means, equally well directed, to bear upon the cultivation of man's moral nature. And, unless the study of this subject can be looked upon as a *science*—unless erudite professors can be induced to give to it that attention which its importance demands—there is reason to fear it will still be cast into the shade, as a subject of no vital interest to the world ; until the awful results arising out of its neglect shall press upon society with a weight even heavier and more alarming than now.

It is impossible to use feeble terms in speaking of so great—so urgent a want as that which now prevails throughout almost all our systems of education ; and, what is most discouraging, in an especial manner throughout those which

appear in the present day to be most approved. However great the magnitude and extent of our social evils, few persons ever dream of looking for their prevention here. And thus, from that very process to which the anxious father is looking for the worldly prosperity, the happiness, or the distinction of his son in afterlife—to which the heart of the fond mother is turned with confidence, in its making her children all which her partial love has pictured for their good—from that very process which the world is trusting to for its own regeneration, are left out of all consideration, (as capable of being wrought into a system of practical utility,) the entire elements of man's moral existence. That the consequences of this *negative* evil, operating so powerfully in early life, are easily and naturally converted into *positive* evil, by the education of circumstances, has already been shown. It remains therefore only to touch slightly upon some of those methods of teaching, which are applied more directly to the wants of the laboring classes.

Under a strong impression of the importance of providing education for the people, in the readiest, and at the same time the least expensive manner, those systems were adopted which became known by the distinctive names of Bell and Lancaster; and it is not easy to imagine how better plans could have been devised for meeting the exigencies of the times in which they originated. The difficulty of procuring a sufficient number of teachers must at first have appeared immense; but this difficulty was soon met by converting the children themselves into teachers—each little monitor the instructor of a class but one degree more ignorant than themselves. And thus the system worked, and has worked on for years, bringing thousands, and hundreds of thousands of children within the sphere of its influence.

That such a system was good—nay, possibly the best which could have been adopted for the times when it arose, is scarcely in the present day a matter of doubt. But there has been ample time since then, for the preparation of more efficient teachers to almost any extent—and what have we been doing? Because the plan was good at first, we have been resting satisfied that nothing could be better; and thus while almost every other system and mode of operation which relates to our inventions, arts, and manufactures, has been undergoing the most rapid and decided improvements; up to the present hour, our method of educating the people has remained very nearly the same for the space of thirty or forty years.

In venturing upon these remarks, the last thing intended or desired, would be to throw out any insinuation against the individual agency of the many able, indefatigable, and excellent persons, who have devoted their time and their energies to this great cause. It is no fault of theirs, that the system altogether has not been productive of higher moral results. For such it was not calculated; and if here and there a child may be found—and happily there are not a few—whose moral character has been rendered what it ought to be, by attendance at those schools, it has been more owing to the consistent example and the personal interest of some Christian teacher, than to any thing which the system itself is calculated to effect.

We have already had to consider the education of circumstances in the training of our streets. There, is a field of exercise provided for every passion, every propensity, of the lowest kind. There, are supplied innumerable motives for deception, dishonesty, contention, violence, and wrong. There, the ruling principle of action is self against the world. How far the system of teaching carried on in our schools for the people, is calculated to counteract this

education of circumstances, it is unnecessary farther to inquire. These schools are only adverted to on the present occasion, as forming one class of the means to which we have been, and still are, looking for the *moral* as well as the intellectual elevation of the people.

Amongst such means we must not omit our Sabbath-schools, affording a spectacle as wonderful in its operation, as in the results produced—wonderful, because we here behold the purely voluntary agency, at stated and regular times, of a vast number of zealous individuals, who, in most instances, are so occupied during the week, that the Sabbath would seem to be, to them especially, a day of almost *necessary* rest. Yet here they are at their accustomed post, without reward, and often without encouragement, early on the Sunday morning, when half the world at least considers it allowable to indulge in an additional portion of rest; here we find them, through summer's heat and winter's cold, laboring in a cause for which they know that this world provides them with no reward; and the success of which, in comparison with their actual effort, is sometimes so small, that it might reasonably deter the most adventurous from further prosecution of their task. Yet the whole aspect of modern society affords perhaps no clearer proof of the power of *moral* influence than this. The teachers, in fact, possess no other. They have no punishments to threaten, no rewards to promise, or at least none which can have any serious weight in the calculations of the children; they are too, for the most part, entire strangers, except when they meet together on one day in seven, to read and converse about those truths of eternal import which the language of the Bible so clearly conveys to every attentive mind.

It is an easy thing to smile at what must be the probable efficiency of Sabbath-school teaching, in some of the hands

to which it is necessarily committed. It is an easy thing to compare it with what many enlightened theorists are ready to inform us *ought* to be our religious instruction of the people. It is an easy thing to relate amusing anecdotes tending to prove how wide of all rational knowledge is the mere verbal lesson which the little scholar is sometimes taught to repeat. It is an easy thing to fall in with the perpetual cry of a certain class of objectors—that because the good effected is not *all* we desire, it is better to do no good at all; but it is not easy, nor has the world found it easy, to supply the same amount of moral good by any other means; the great secret of the influence of this teaching, consisting in a clear understanding on the part of the scholars, that their instructors have the *good of the children sincerely at heart*.

On this subject I cannot refrain from using the words of one who has devoted the study of many years, with the efforts of an earnest mind and benevolent heart, to the practical working of different systems of moral and intellectual training for the young, and who justly observes, of our Sunday-schools, that “they are an important part of that Christian machinery by which the poor and neglected portion of the community have been improved.

“We are not disposed,” he continues, “to cavil at the many imperfections of the system generally.—We are rather disposed, with gratitude to God, to acknowledge the great good done during the last sixty years, since their first establishment—as well as what is at present doing, by their instrumentality, throughout the length and breadth of the land.

“The practical benefit arising to the teacher of a Sabbath-school is alone sufficient to ensure our advocacy for their establishment. In a rational point of view, Sabbath-school teaching has brought into exercise those sympathies

with the poor, and those Christian habits, to which society is indebted for many of its best and most practical philanthropists."

The same writer* then goes on to show how—this means of moral improvement being available only on one day in seven—the teacher has to contend against the influence of the remaining six, in too many instances spent under no better discipline than that of the streets, or of homes in which the education of circumstances is directly opposed, in its moral tendency, to that which the Sunday-school teacher so zealously endeavors to carry forward, with the Bible for his guide. When all this is taken into consideration, instead of complaining of the deficiency of means, we rather express, with grateful astonishment, our surprise that an agency, apparently so feeble and uncertain, should have been productive of so vast an amount of real good. The fact, however, is clearly explained on the principle already alluded to—that the moral part of the child's nature has been distinctly addressed. It has, in reality, been identified with its teacher in union of interest on one great point. It sees no possible reason why the teacher should come there at stated periods, and often, as is evident, at considerable inconvenience, except from those motives of affectionate sympathy which a kind and earnest manner is so well calculated to express; and, reasoning, as children are quite able to do, upon evidence of this nature, it is won over, in many cases, to confide, implicitly, both in the truth and the importance of the instruction conveyed.

On the starting up of any new idea, if practically carried out, or the experiment of any new plan, which produces a sensible impression, and, through that impression, is

* Mr. Stow.

effective in accomplishing a certain amount of good, we are apt to rush to the conclusion, that this is the very thing—perhaps *every thing* that we ourselves, or the world, is in want of. Thus, benevolent individuals have eagerly caught at the idea, that schools for the very lowest of the low—such as are known by the name of Ragged-schools—would prove a panacea for the moral evils existing amongst that class of the community.

In all these cases, however, benevolence itself would do well to examine what principles are involved in those plans, which, on the surface, look so full of hope; for it is only so far as sound principles operate, that any lasting good can be anticipated. The successful working of our Sunday-schools may be said to rest entirely upon this principle, and it is one which lies deep at the foundation of all moral and religious influence—the principle of benevolence here shown, in the earnestness, the zeal, the patience, the self-denial, and the untiring perseverance of the teachers; thus, making it evident to the children, that *their* good, both in this world and the next, is the ruling motive with those who undertake this generous and noble task. Indeed, so powerful is the operation of this principle, as to produce a conviction in the minds of all concerned in the duty of Sabbath-school teaching, that an agency unpaid, and purely voluntary, is absolutely necessary to the right working of the system altogether.

It is precisely the same principle which is at work, and is producing those encouraging results in the schools already mentioned as established for the lowest of the low. The sad feeling, that they are so, operating upon the minds of these neglected beings—that they could not be admitted into any regularly organized establishment—that respectable doors are closed against them—and that they are actually invited from the very streets, to share the common

sympathies of humanity, and to experience the care and the solicitude of a class of persons whom, until that hour, they had regarded as separated from them by an immeasurable distance—it is the combination of feelings and circumstances such as these, so new in their experience, yet so clearly illustrating the principle of benevolence, which suddenly arrests the accustomed course of their passions and their actions, stops, for a moment, the tide of vicious habits, which had poured pollution on their path, and brings them on their knees, to listen to the prayers which commend them, as fellow-sufferers and fellow-sinners, to the mercy of one universal Father, who spared not his own Son for their redemption.

In listening to these solemn truths, from voices to which their ears are unaccustomed, and in being made the direct recipients of care and kindness from individuals whose very persons, dress, and bearing, mark them out as widely separated from the humble walks of poverty, and still more widely from the darker paths of vice, there are many pleasant and touching associations combined, which, altogether, produce an influence calculated to reach the heart not yet entirely hardened in the school of wickedness.

But, with more than respect—with deep reverence for these benevolent and noble efforts, what principle, it may be asked, do they embody, beyond the one just specified, to render them the means of consistent, lasting, and efficient usefulness? That very principle itself, in such cases, can only be exhibited through the medium of voluntary agency, and by the strong contrast of decency with ragged wretchedness, and virtue with vice. So soon, therefore, as these degraded beings are raised one step higher in respectability, a proportionate degree of force will be taken from the operation of this principle.

It is clear, that in all these instances too much depen-

dence is placed upon collateral and surrounding circumstances, calculated only to produce some relative good ; and too little upon the carrying out of those moral principles which would apply to any, and hold good in all. Just so far, then, as the *principle* of benevolence is brought into operation upon the minds of those instructed in the schools, are they established on a lasting and a sure foundation, with regard to moral good.

But, it may be asked, must all teaching, then, be purely voluntary, in order to render it efficient ? By no means. Under other circumstances, the same principle may be brought into operation by a different agency. It should never be forgotten, however, that the principle *must be there*, and must also be *felt* to be there ; for without benevolence on the part of those who undertake to educate the young, even to the extent of personal kindness, charity, and earnest solicitude for their highest good—without all this, too, being seen and understood, on the part of those who are its recipients, all moral training must necessarily prove as fruitless, as our mere professions hitherto have proved, in producing any practically beneficial effect upon the great body of the people.

The classification by which our public schools are designated, comprises so many, and such minute variations of system, that to enumerate them would be as difficult as useless. We have the monitorial system—the system of exchange of places in class—teaching by question and answer, and teaching by ellipsis—teaching by catechisms—teaching by oral instruction ; with definitions beyond all power of calculation ; yet, amongst all these, the infant-school alone, with one other exception in our schools for the people, appears the only system of education which aims directly at the moral sentiments of the pupils under tuition. That this method of instruction, so

far as it extends, is really working well, there can now be no doubt. The one thing wanted to its further success, is the engrafting upon it a more complete system of *training* as well as *teaching*.

These observations upon what education is, as at present carried on in this country, cannot be better concluded than in the words of the writer already quoted. "Education," he justly observes, "in the sense in which it is generally understood, never has, and never can, morally elevate a community. Mere secular knowledge cannot, by any possibility, accomplish the work; and extensive knowledge of the history and facts of Scripture, apart from the early habit being formed, of reducing *its lessons* into practice, is frequently conjoined with the most dissolute manners, and absolute disbelief of the great end for which the Bible was written. Men can discuss the subjects, and yet hate the principles and precepts of Scripture. In regard to the working classes, we find very many who can read, write, and cast accounts, and who have read Scripture in school, and have retained much of it in their memories, who are yet profligate—nay, in some cases, guilty of flagrant crimes, and who, moreover, are totally ignorant of the fact, that they are naturally inclined to evil, or that they stand in need of a Saviour. 'Knowledge, indeed, is power;' but it is a power for evil, as well as for good." . . . "We ought to read the Scriptures, it is true; but the command is not simply, '*read*,' but '*search*'—'*search as for hidden treasures*.' Such is our object.* The lessons, as well as the facts of Scripture, must be enforced on the understanding, and reduced *into practice in real life*, under proper superintendence, ere we can hope that the word of God will be influential in elevating man in all the virtues and graces of

* The object of the Training System.

social life, or in fitting him for the enjoyment of a pure and holy God throughout eternity."

Thus far we have considered only the subject of direct teaching, which has hitherto been regarded as the chief, and, in many instances, the only object aimed at in our schools. That the mere process of imparting knowledge, however valuable that knowledge may be, and the exercise of the intellectual faculties alone, however useful such exercise may prove in the life of man as a physical and intellectual being, and nothing more—that this process contains not within itself the elements of moral reformation, and is therefore not capable of producing those effects upon society which the wants of the world demand, has been sufficiently shown, and must, in fact, be clearly understood by all who will look into the subject with impartial minds.

Nor does the acknowledgment of this fact at all militate against the many proofs existing around us, that the personal influence sometimes of a single noble-minded and enlightened individual, may be productive of the happiest results in elevating the tone of moral feeling within a certain sphere or circle of society. Such influence, however, being dependent upon individual character, and often, in addition to other qualifications, upon a certain kind of natural tact which cannot be communicated from one to another, must always be liable to cease on the withdrawal of such personal direction. Thus, how often, on the death of an excellent superintendent, have we to regret that the institution dependent for its welfare upon moral influence, though still governed by the same rules, has ceased to *be* the same in the true elements of its well-being? and this must ever be the case so long as tact and personal influence continue to be the only foundation upon which we build our hopes of moral reformation. Tact is, without doubt, an important qualification in the exercise of

personal influence ; but our means of improvement must ever remain to be fitful, partial, uncertain, and fearfully inadequate to the requirements of our social condition, unless we can establish them upon the sure foundation of principles which will apply to all situations, and be made useful in the hands of any right-minded person, fully acquainted with their nature, and their operation in the formation of character.

It is an agreeable task, after dwelling so long upon the evils which society is vainly attempting to cure, to turn to some practical means of prevention ; especially to such as have now been tested in their real value by the experience of many years. I shall point out these advantages more effectually, by inviting the attention of the reader to an admirable work, by Mr. Stow, on the " Training System," in which many important principles of moral improvement are clearly defined, and their practical working strikingly illustrated. In addition to this, I am unable to withhold my humble testimony to the importance of the system, as the only *practical* exemplification of direct moral training, established upon sure principles, which it has ever been my happiness to become acquainted with.

My own observations, however, can only refer to impressions. In the hope of doing higher justice to the system, I have asked for facts,* and the reply has always

* In answer to some of these inquiries I received the following letter.

" The *known* good that has been already accomplished by this system has far exceeded the hopes of directors and trainers, and is such as it might seem exaggeration to describe. But this ascertained good is insignificant, compared with that fuller development of early-instilled principles which will assuredly be manifested in all the domestic, social, and political relations of *afterlife*, and with those deeper influences on society, which are intimately connected with the highest destiny of man's existence. The most important results of early moral training are beyond the utmost reach of our observation, and can be known only to Him who is the Searcher of all hearts.

" It is thus evident, that although numerous, and in themselves highly interesting instances of the beneficial effects of training, both on the intellectual

been in accordance with Mr. Stow's own introduction to the subject of Moral Training, as described in his work,

and moral character of individuals, and on the general aspect and tone of schools, might easily be adduced; they furnish but meager data for conclusion, in reference to the system in all its length and breadth. As such instances are, however, well fitted to convince those who are disposed to regard the system as simply a beautiful theory—a mere fanciful exposition of the text, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,'—that it is essentially practical in its working, and unspeakably beneficial in its results, the following, it is hoped, will not be altogether useless.

"It has been the experience of almost every trainer, that on the opening of a new school, when the law of love, and not that of physical force, is made the regulating principle, and the Reason of the children is rendered subservient to order and obedience, the greatest confusion at first prevails, arising probably in a great measure from change of discipline. For the first few days,

' Let him take who has the power,
And let him keep who can,'

seems to be the spirit of the playground; rudeness in speech and behavior, frequent outbursts of passion, and all the phenomena of lawlessness and selfishness, are exhibited. But in a short time, when frequent appeals have been made to the higher principles of their character, when their sympathies have been enlisted on the side of order, right, and truth,—when their judgment has been exercised, and all confirmed by constant reference to the word and will of God, a remarkable change becomes apparent. Harmony, love, and truth; ardor in intellectual pursuits; mutual forbearance and respect, (for 'dolts' and 'boobies' are never heard of;) regard to each other's property and comfort, and all the other characteristics of well-regulated society, begin to be manifested alike in the exercises of the school, and the amusements of the playground. Month after month brings decided improvement, until at last the occasional visiter is astonished at the promptness to obey, the willingness to oblige, and the cheerfulness and alacrity which pervade all the classes. The school is now under the influence of a healthful, moral atmosphere, and the best principles are in vigorous exercise; unseen it may be, but not the less effective in their operation. When new scholars enter, however different in character and disposition, a process of assimilation goes on, and their distinctive features gradually disappear. It is impossible that it should be otherwise—it is as impossible to be brought into close social communion with the virtuous and happy, and not be benefited, as it is to be in the midst of light, without receiving some portion of its coloring; or to retire after remaining for some time amid precious odors, without carrying away some portion of the fragrance. It is in the case of children being enrolled, markedly different in character from that into which a well-trained school has been moulded, that the influence of the *sympathy of numbers*, and of the other more distinctive instruments of the training system, is most obviously perceptible. Many examples of this kind might be furnished, illustrative of the effect pro-

where he observes—"Were a stranger, on paying a transient visit to a family, the children of which exhibited such prompt obedience as to be directed by the parent by a nod or a look; and further, did they at table, and in their own conduct, act in such a manner as to prove themselves to

duced on their intellectual and religious character, but the two following may suffice.

"A few years ago, a boy about ten years of age was enrolled, remarkable for the rudeness of his answers, the uncourteousness of his general deportment, his sulkiness, and the obstinacy with which he maintained any statement he made, in spite of the clearest evidence against him. He took no pains to excel, in school, in any of his classes; in the playground he soon rendered himself conspicuous by the violence of his conduct, and his harshness to all who offended him. His combativeness and destructiveness, to use the language of phrenology, were in full and constant exercise. The worst feature in his character was, perhaps, his frequent trifling with the most sacred subjects, and the apparent satisfaction he had in showing contempt for all authority. He had been in schools previous to his entering the Institution, and, after many an effort to bring him into subjection by severe physical chastisement, had been pronounced incorrigible. He is still in school, but remarkably changed in habit, both of thought and action. This alteration has taken place almost imperceptibly—there is no period in the history of his training from which it can be dated. While all the harsher features of his character have passed away, he still preserves, (and it is well he should,) all his originality and native vigor of feeling and thought, with that difference only which is to be found in the altered direction of their tendency.

"After a number of new pupils had been enrolled, at the commencement of a quarter, some time ago, frequent instances occurred of pencils, pen-knives, and other trifling articles, being stolen. The children were in constant fear of losing their playthings, for it was evident there was now no unskilful thief among their number. Lesson after lesson was brought to bear on the subject as occasion permitted, but for several weeks without any effect. The master knew the thief, but, wishing not to expose him, awaited the result. The impossibility of escaping the eye of God; the consequences of this sin, in time and eternity; the duty of restoring; the willingness of God to forgive—were all pictured out, and sympathized in by the children. After a considerable time had elapsed, the master was very agreeably surprised to find, on entering the school, nearly all the stolen articles placed on the Bible-stand. This act received the commendation of the teacher and children. About a month afterwards, the boy who had taken the articles came to the master in a retired part of the playground, stating, that he had taken the children's playthings, and offering a shilling which he had received from his aunt to replace those which he had disposed of to boys in the street. As he begged not to tell his name to his schoolfellows, they know nothing of this once expert little thief."

have been under excellent training—were this stranger-visiter to say to the mother, ‘I am quite delighted with the conduct and polite manners of your family; pray, tell me how you manage? How do you get your children to be so obedient to yourself, and kind to one another?’ The prudent mother would say, ‘*Come and see*—come and live in my house; and what I cannot possibly make you understand by telling or explanation, you may fully understand by observing my course of training. Little quarrels occur in my family as they do in others, but I endeavor to render them as unfrequent as possible. My children sometimes exhibit a disobedient disposition, but I check this by causing them *instantly to obey*. The manner *how*, I really cannot explain to you. I act according to circumstances. The results you see, but the process I cannot possibly tell. Live with me a month or two, and you may see a little. I must be offended—the fault must be committed, before I interfere; and then, should you be present, not as a stranger, but an inmate, you shall see how I endeavor to proceed. The tempers and dispositions of my children are varied; and the nature of the provocations, or mutual misconceptions, requires the utmost delicacy on my part, more, indeed, than in my own strength I am capable of performing; but I do my best, and God has been pleased to bless my endeavors.’ The mother-trainer may again repeat, in answer to the visiter’s request, ‘*Come and see*.’

“This is precisely the answer that a judicious school-trainer would give to a visiter who desires him to explain how he morally trains his scholars—*Come and see*,—remain here a month or two, and I will show you how we proceed. My children do not always steal, or lie, or quarrel, or fight, or deceive, or exhibit the strong propensity of selfishness. These must be developed in likely circumstances, and are then met by what we endeavor to

render suitable antidotes.”—These observations, of course, refer only to the manner, or the method, applied to individual cases. The system, considered as a whole, comprehends some principles of general application, which cannot be too earnestly commended to the attention of the public.

The impression produced upon my own mind on first entering the establishment,* where several hundreds of children are brought under the operation of the Training System, was one not easily forgotten, and such as could not fail to be equally powerful with all who are earnestly and anxiously looking for the *reality* of moral education. It is not merely that the children are orderly; many schools are orderly; but their simple, childlike, cheerful obedience, as frank and as willing as it is instantaneous, appears, at first, almost startling, in connection with the extreme mildness and gentleness of manner by which this obedience is called forth, leading the observer to doubt, whether in reality, obedience is not the most natural and agreeable thing in the world on the part of the young towards the more advanced in years—the ignorant towards the better instructed. Although men are chiefly employed as Trainers, the kindness of their manner to the children could not be exceeded by that of the gentlest of mothers; and, instead of those loud, harsh, hacking questions, which, in some of our public schools, produce an effect like plucking the answer out of a child by main force, the questioning of these masters more resembles a system of calm inquiry pursued in connection with the young and the simple-hearted, for the especial purpose of eliciting truth. By this, and many similar means, a humanizing effect is produced upon the children, so that while, in masses of hundreds, they are obedient as if actuated by one impulse, to the slightest waving of an authoritative hand; they are

towards each other, as well as towards their instructors, courteous, and even polite, in their willingness to make selfish gratification give place to the higher considerations of justice and of kindness.

In the very heart of a city like Glasgow, the question naturally suggested itself to my mind—"What do you do with those vices which exhibit themselves so plentifully even in the rural districts of England—such as theft, for instance? and the answer of Mr. Stow was then what it has since been, "that the training system, when fully conducted, produces such an improved moral influence on all the children, that although there are daily checks, and a constant moulding of character and habit required, it is seldom that any one can long resist the power of this natural and Christian system. For there is, first, the restraining of the physical or outward habit; the infusion of Christian—of course honorable and courteous, conduct on simple Bible principles; the eye of the master, and revision of the conduct in the presence of all the scholars; the eye and *sympathy* of the children themselves; which, all combined, seldom or ever fail in making the pilferer honest, the rough more gentle, and the contentious less quarrelsome, even within a fortnight. These gradually and imperceptibly form into habits of thought, feeling, and outward conduct. In schools conducted on the Training System, therefore, there are fewer cases apparent of vicious conduct, except during the first few weeks, than in ordinary-teaching schools. Ours is more a uniform, or universal influence." It is, as Mr. Stow elsewhere observes, strictly speaking, a system exemplifying the important truth, that "Prevention is better than Cure."

The earnestness and simplicity with which the truths contained in this valuable work are described, are not less striking than their *practical* bearing upon the great subject

of education. It is not peculiar to the training system, that great principles are embodied in simple means. In physical science this has ever been the case, that the most valuable discoveries have been found the most simple, when clearly understood ; and if we hail with a gratification proportioned to the utility of its results, that knowledge by which the miner is now enabled to work out his dark life in safety to its natural close ; that discovery demands at least an equal welcome, by which the whole human race may, under God's blessing, be assisted in walking in a path of virtuous integrity, benevolence, and usefulness, waiting only for the aid of his Spirit to give them a holier impulse, a loftier aim, a more enduring purpose, in their endeavors to act in all things consistently with his revealed and righteous will.

CHAPTER XII.

SLIGHT HINTS ON GREAT PRINCIPLES.

IN connection with that general view of the moral condition of our country, which renders it so evident that the means already put in force for the cure of our social evils have proved inadequate to that end, there are particular views of the utmost importance to the further consideration of this subject, in its practical bearings. These have strict reference to some of the great principles which lie at the foundation of moral influence ; and which, if we would accomplish any real good, must be brought into operation in the formation of character, in such a manner as to render them available to all classes of society, and applicable to every diversity of circumstance and situation.

The fact of "Prevention rather than Cure," being the object of primary consideration, our attention is necessarily carried back to those early stages of human experience, in which the mind is most capable of impression; the judgment unprejudiced in its application; and the feelings altogether in the most favorable state for consistent, healthy, and beneficial exercise. Education lays hold of this period of human experience, for the express purpose of preparing in the best possible manner, every individual brought under its influence, for what has to be met with, as well as for what has to be *done*, in afterlife. We do not cultivate the intellectual portion of man's nature to prepare him for being always a learner—always at school; but to prepare him to use those faculties himself, with the best possible effect, so as that they may be ready for exercise, and serviceable to him under all circumstances, as well as applicable to whatever objects or pursuits may constitute the business of his life. For this purpose he is carefully *trained* in the use of his intellectual powers.

Here then we come to a great principle, which must be fully recognised in all our systems of moral education, before we can look for any happier results than are now experienced. It is this—*that the great end of moral education is not to govern the young, but to enable the young to govern themselves*. The practical means hitherto made use of for accomplishing this object, consist almost entirely of rewards and punishments, each differing widely in their nature under different systems of management, yet all essentially the same in their operation upon the mind and character, because addressed to the same moral faculties in almost every case. It is true that rewards and punishments form at once the most natural, reasonable, and legitimate means of moral discipline, consistent alike with the laws of nature, and the will of God. But it should

never be forgotten that the rewards and punishments themselves, must be of such a nature as to bear close relation to the motives and principles which are intended to form the basis of future character. If the reward affixed to honesty, for instance, consists of some article of personal property, or possession of any material good, how will that apply to a moral condition, such as we know that all must meet with in the world, where strict honesty has too often to be maintained at the sacrifice of personal gain, and where its opposite too often promises an increase of worldly possessions ?

In the moral government of the world, under the direction of an all-wise Creator, we find that temporal prosperity is, by no means, proportioned to a faithful obedience to his holy will ; although we cannot doubt that if all mankind were brought under the operation of his moral law, the possession of property would be at once more equal, and more secure, than in the present state of the world. The rewards and punishments which God has himself attached to the observation, or the neglect of his laws, are then such as are sanctioned both by nature and reason, consisting almost entirely of the approval, or disapproval, of fellow-beings subject to the same law, and the secret consciousness of having done right or wrong.

Such, then, should be the nature of those rewards and punishments which are made use of in moral discipline ; and, if we desire to elevate the moral standard of society, we must prepare for the operation of these means, under a stricter moral law than is now observed in the world, by an increased attention—an *earnest solicitude*—so to adjust the balance of rewards and punishments, that, though still measured by public opinion, that opinion may always be in the right—supported, approved, and confirmed, by the revealed will of God.

Nothing more opposed to the right formation of moral character could well have been devised, than the system of rewards and punishments now generally employed in the education of the young ; leading, in one case, to the eager anticipation of some direct personal gain, in the other, to the avoidance of some personal privation or suffering, neither of which have any relation or reference to the circumstances of afterlife. Nor is this all ; prizes and punishments of the nature most frequently used, are not merely negative evils, failing only in the end desired ; they are, unfortunately, too positive in their evil tendency, because they stimulate selfishness, and thus substitute a *wrong motive* for the performance of a *right act*.

It is not to be supposed, however, that all idea of reward can be entirely dismissed from the minds of the young. That would be to imagine a child exalted above the common feelings of humanity. It would be opposed also to the whole tenor of Scripture language, and doctrine. It would, in fact, be anticipating a daily miracle, to expect that children should be induced to make any continued and consistent effort requiring great self-denial, without secretly looking forward to some reward, or trusting that consequences would follow of such a nature as to constitute a reward to them. Thus, the approbation of their companions becomes at once a natural stimulus, and a just and reasonable reward ; the more so, that it is strictly applicable to the whole of human life, where the sympathy of fellow-laborers in the same cause, and fellow-heirs of the same promises, is often, even to the Christian, a reward as eagerly anticipated, as deeply and gratefully felt.

But besides the approbation of companions associated in the same objects and interests, there are rewards of encouragement, if such a term may be used—rewards which apply strictly to the future course of those under training,

such as assistance in the conduct of their affairs, or any other means of helping forward in a career of respectability, usefulness, or honorable distinction; all which might be applied with the most beneficial influence, provided only the whole character was so trained as that their *value* should be *fully appreciated*. Hitherto the world has been sparing of rewards of this kind, because, when applied in connection with a low state of moral feeling, they are almost sure to be abused. But surely this will be one of the happy accompaniments of an improved moral condition—that we shall be no longer afraid to assist our poor but honest neighbors; and the young especially, in taking creditably those first safe steps in their worldly career, for want of which so many in the present day, even of the most deserving, are crushed down, and defeated in their laudable endeavors. It will indeed be no trifling addition to the sum of human happiness, when the benevolent shall dare to trust; when the trusted shall know the value of such confidence, and hold it inviolate.

The more entirely those who are expected to govern themselves can be thrown upon motive and principle, the better. They must, however, not only be thrown upon motive and principle, they must be made to understand them, to compare them with the word of God, and to feel that they are something *real* and *sure*. They must be made to understand, also, that circumstances form the character only so far as they call motives into exercise; and that principles of conduct, if just and true, and consistent with the Divine will, may often be as beneficially exemplified in the seeming trifles of life which are familiar to all, as in those greater events which rarely occur to any.

Another great principle of vital importance in moral education, is brought under consideration by looking at the subject in this light; for how are the young, or rather

those who are ignorant of these things, whether young or old, to be made to understand them? It is clear that *occasions* must first arise by which different motives for action may be developed. Action, then, is absolutely necessary. But the busiest schools, and other establishments for teaching or correction which we have, and those which are the most approved, leave no *time* for action of this kind—no scope for the development of moral character. Here, then, is a great, though popular mistake. We call those schools or other institutions *good*, in which the inmates are well governed; not those in which the inmates are *governing themselves* well, or *learning* to govern themselves. Indeed, we are not making trial of this latter experiment—it is not the fashion of the times in which we live—there is no demand in the market for such an article as *self-government*, only so far as circumstances may render it essential to personal safety or advantage.

But, to speak more directly to the case in question. This second principle, so important in moral education, which has been clearly brought to light, practically exemplified, and established, by the admirable “System of Training” already alluded to, is based upon this fact—that in order morally to train the young, or, indeed, to train any human being ignorant of self-government, time and opportunity must be allowed for the exercise of the moral faculties—socially, as man is situated in common life—freely, as only they can be clearly exhibited and understood—and beneath the observation of persons qualified to bring home to the convictions of those under training, the moral nature of what has actually been *done*—not merely talked about. It is evident that some sacrifice of time for lessons or labor must be made, where this great object is intended to be fully carried out; but it is equally evident, to those who have made themselves acquainted with the working

of the Training System, that, by this means, the trifling loss of time otherwise employed in mere learning, would be repaid a thousandfold in value, by the advantages that would thus be ensured for the whole conduct of life.

The fact is every day becoming more and more evident to the candid and enlightened portion of the public, that no good can be effected, *morally*, by excessive restraint; and that, to cut off the natural channels for outward exhibition of the tempers, passions, and propensities of human nature, is a widely different thing from guiding them aright. Thus, an extremely strict, orderly, and what is often called a "well-managed" school for children, might send forth its pupils wholly unprepared for being any thing better than children for life.

Looking at the subject in this point of view, all impartial minds will be of one opinion; but it has not yet become equally evident, even to the most candid, or the most enlightened, that excessive occupation, of an intellectual nature, or excessive physical labor, strictly as such, produces precisely the same moral effect as that already alluded to as the consequence of excessive restraint. The natural tide of feeling will burst forth somewhere. Under strict outward restraint, it will find for itself an under-current. After long disuse of the passions and sentiments, such as necessarily accompanies protracted hours of intellectual occupation, learning, or labor, they will develop themselves, often in exaggerated and irrational indulgence—often hurrying on their victim to violence or excess.

It must ever be borne in mind, then,—and would that it could be written in letters of light over the door of every educational establishment!—that Teaching is not Training—that restraint is not improvement; and if we desire to establish a higher tone of moral feeling throughout society at large, or even throughout any class or portion of the

community, we must not be satisfied with negative, and still less with compulsory means. The methods we adopt for this purpose—and it is one well worthy of the most strenuous effort—must be direct and positive; they must apply expressly, and with force and precision, to that portion of human nature which constitutes the moral character.

For the carrying out of this great object, time, occasion, and liberty of action *must* be afforded; and if, as is too often the case, the sacrifice of time for a few lessons should be objected to, it must be borne in mind, that although fewer tasks may be repeated, the intellectual faculties are, in reality, engaged in natural, wholesome and beneficial exercise, during the process of moral training. Memory, for instance, is closely engaged in recalling passages and facts from Scripture history; judgment is especially employed in considering different, or similar cases, and drawing conclusions therefrom; and observation is quickened to detect, though with no unfriendly motive; while all these faculties, brought into earnest and vigorous exercise, under the direction of the highest sentiments of which human nature is capable, and employed with strict reference to the will and word of God, constitute a lesson of the deepest interest, calculated to produce the warmest and most intense emotions; and, what is of infinitely more importance—calculated to influence the character and conduct through the whole of life.

It is easy to perceive that such impressions, however intense for the moment, if not frequently renewed, and if not carried out into practice, would pass away from the mind of youth like gleams of sunshine from a wintry landscape, producing neither fruitfulness nor lasting good. For this reason also, time and opportunity *must* be allowed; not only that right impressions may be deepened and re-

newed, but that they may become habitual in their influence upon daily conduct. In the Training System the use of an extensive playground, under the supervision of the master, is made highly conducive to this purpose, and thus constitutes an essential part of moral discipline. In schools of a somewhat different description, where the pupils admitted are placed in a temporary home, extreme liberty of action, under the same kind of superintendence, might, without difficulty, be made conducive to the same end.

Another great principle of moral education is embodied in a system which throws the responsibility of moral conduct upon those who are to be benefited, and who are, in reality, the responsible parties. It has been too much the custom in our schools, as well as in other institutions of a similar nature, to regard it as a thing taken for granted between the governors and the governed, that moral responsibility rests entirely with the former; and, according to the manner in which young people have generally been treated, it certainly would. But once let a little community, identified with any establishment, be made to feel that the order, comfort, respectability, and happiness of that community rests with them—that it is, in reality, in their power to render it a creditable or a discreditable establishment—a cheerful or a gloomy home—a scene of peace or a place of discord and strife—that even the outward respectability of the institution, whatever it may be, and the place it holds in public esteem, may be raised or lowered by very slight efforts, simultaneously made by them, the whole aspect of their social affairs assumes a different and a very important character—more especially when they are also made clearly to understand, that no effort, on the part of the few, or the one holding authority, can possibly maintain the order, comfort, and good of the whole, if they are determined, unitedly, and as a body, to act in a manner op-

posed to the real interests of the community. It may also be shown how very small an effort, on the part of each, if cheerfully and simultaneously made, will ensure a great good to all—such as punctuality, for instance; and this may perhaps be brought home more forcibly to some minds, by showing how the delay of one individual, even for a single moment, by occasioning the loss of one moment to a number, is, in reality, destroying, in the aggregate, an important amount of valuable property in *time*, which is the rightful property of all, and which, if once destroyed, can never be restored.

In order to fix upon the minds of all the members of such a community impressions of this nature, it is highly important that their conduct should not be regulated by direct rules, more than is necessary to test obedience, and to maintain the order and comfort of the whole establishment. An express rule for every action, leaves no opportunity for the exercise of motive; no scope for the development of character. Habit, in such cases, assumes the proper place of principle; and intelligent beings, deprived of their responsibility, are thus converted into mere machines. Already we have considered the importance of bringing into use such motives as will be available in after-life, instead of the low desire of obtaining a prize, or escaping a punishment; and we see here the importance of throwing the weight of responsibility upon the right party—upon those who have to act, and who are expressly under training for *right action* in their future career. So long as this weight is understood to rest with the *few* or the *one* in authority, the *many* under such authority will never learn to govern themselves.

Various methods may be adopted for producing these impressions and convictions; and there are earnest workers in the business of education, who, if their attention

could be directed to this branch of the subject, would, no doubt, be able to make valuable discoveries in this important sphere, and to bring before the observation of the public improved means of arriving at this desirable end ; but the principle *must* be maintained ; the impression must be deepened and kept up, that those who are to act consistently and from right motives in afterlife, should begin not only to understand what right motives are in early youth, but to test their value in the relations of juvenile association, by the practice of every day, under judicious superintendence and friendly and sympathizing care ; and so to incorporate them into manner, habit, and accustomed feeling, as that they shall be always ready for service under those pressing emergencies and powerful temptations, which are likely to occur after that friendly assistance shall be withdrawn.

The daily intercourse of a private family, whose thoughts, words, and actions are habitually regulated by right motives, has a powerful effect in moulding aright the pliant character of youth, not only because there is a frequent recurrence of the same impressions, and the same stimulating motives, but because the habitual adoption of such motives is accompanied by so many endearing and agreeable associations.

It is scarcely necessary to dwell upon a principle now so universally recognised, as that which renders it absolutely necessary for youth to be made *happy* in order to produce any effects of lasting good in the formation of character. That which is made wearisome, odious, or in any other way repugnant to the young, they will naturally desire to avoid, however strongly it may have been commended to them in words ; and sometimes even will rush upon the direct opposite of what has been recommended in an unpleasant manner, so soon as they are set free to

act for themselves. At the same time, however, it must not be forgotten, that a diseased moral condition requires that a bitter draught should sometimes be administered, rather than a pleasant sweet. We should therefore study not only what is agreeable—though that is of great importance—but we should so arrange our plans as to comprehend, in the system we adopt, what is at once agreeable and beneficial. We can never do this without a close and intimate acquaintance with human nature, without strong sympathies to aid in the practical working of our plans, and an earnestness of purpose beyond what any other interest in life, short of religion itself, demands.

But in the right adjustment of responsibility so as to make it rest upon the parties who are expected to act, and be *felt* so to rest, we find another important and valuable principle involved, wherever there are numbers brought together under this influence. It is, that in the sharing of this responsibility—in the substitution of the good of a community for the good of self, as a motive for right conduct—the thoughts are called out of that narrow and selfish circle, within which all persons are too apt to concentrate their interests, and their efforts. The more our endeavors and our hopes of doing what is just and right are led away from self, and diffused through channels of benevolence over the wide realm of society, including not only a particular set or party, but the whole brotherhood of mankind, the more we become freed from prejudice, and set at liberty to think impartially, and feel charitably with all our fellow-creatures. The first important step towards this end, is to get out of self; and this is best accomplished, as already stated, by making the good of a community the object of primary consideration with all its members; a point which may be easily gained amongst children, or young people, sharing the same household arrangements, subject to the same rules,

associated for the same purposes, and altogether equal in their rights. It is easy to perceive how, in such an establishment, a little selfish claim may sometimes interfere with general claims—how one rebellious will may frustrate the best endeavors of the whole. Beholding this clearly brought to light before the view of numbers, the selfish becomes ashamed, and, acquiescing in the general tone of feeling, finally prefers the higher motive, and acts consistently with the good of numbers, rather than the good of self alone.

We now come to the consideration of a very important principle, which owes its establishment, as an element in moral training, to the indefatigable efforts of the benevolent individual already named.* It is the *sympathy of numbers*. Home education, excellent as it may be in other respects, is necessarily deficient in this great power; and hence the difficulty in private families of effecting any radical change in favor of a higher tone of moral feeling. We readily perceive from observation of the world, that wherever the moral standard is low, where justice and truth are disregarded, and where the gratification of ungoverned passion is an object generally allowed, that the sympathy of numbers has a fearful, though an indirect, weight on the wrong side; for few will venture openly, even in a state of things so low as this, to advocate what is acknowledged to be evil. But we should remember for our satisfaction, that the principle is one which possesses the same power of throwing weight on the *right* side; and that by laying hold of this, and skilfully directing its use, we may, in time, establish a different tone of feeling throughout communities, or masses of individuals, provided only, they are entirely, and without reserve, subject to the application of the right means.

* Mr. Stow.

It is a mockery of words to speak of our moral condition being improved by *half* measures, still less by *talking* on the subject, as we have talked too long, without understanding our own words. The wants of our country are urgent; they have been neglected until they now cry out upon us from every lane, and street, and rural village, and densely-peopled city. All other branches of improvement have claimed attention, and have made proportionately rapid progress, except this. We consequently require a force to be brought to bear on this great point, not only adequate to the pains bestowed upon the intellectual culture of the young, but of such power as actually to redeem the past, and to impel the moral course of the rising generation upwards, and onwards, until the intellectual progress, already attained, shall be overtaken, and even surpassed.

The tastes and habits of the times in which we live, have a peculiar bias in favor of whatever is conducted upon an extensive scale, so as to operate publicly and *en masse*, rather than privately and individually. Ours is not a day in which we can consistently advise even the affluent, and those in easy circumstances, to stay at home, and attend to the moral training of their children. The claims which are now considered most pressing upon society, are public claims; and of these, no small proportion are urgent in their demands upon Christian benevolence; so that amongst our earnest workers, the best women, and the most enlightened men, are alike occupied in doing good in a public and extensive manner.

Such being the case, the present time appears peculiarly favorable to the trial of great experiments, made on such a scale as to test the value of the principle involved in the sympathy of numbers operating upon individual minds; and if, in masses or communities, this force can be thrown

on the right side, there will soon become little sections of society maintaining a high moral standard ; and these, increasing rapidly, as there is every reason to hope they will, when the true principles of moral training shall be fully tried and clearly understood, a higher tone of feeling will thus become diffused throughout the whole of society itself.

The principle involved in the sympathy of numbers is already a busy agent in the education of circumstances ; but, too frequently, an agent in planting evil, rather than in cultivating good. Did the opinion of society, *practically* as well as verbally expressed, lean always to the side of what is right, and were that right subjected to the will and word of God, we should behold, in such an improved and happy state of things, the full value of the sympathy of numbers. It is a most encouraging fact, that something very much like this is now the order and the rule of schools conducted on the training system, where, such is the force of this influence, that no rewards or punishments which have ever yet been devised, could work with half the same amount of power, in moulding individual character, and fixing the motives and actions of daily life upon a right foundation.

Those who are accustomed to speak in public, who themselves are earnest in the establishment of some great truth, or the carrying out of some great purpose, know well the force and value of the sympathy of numbers. An audience consisting of a few scattered individuals is difficult to arouse, even by the most eloquent appeals ; but an audience closely packed, when once an impression has been made, appears to catch the thrilling thought, as if communicated by some electric impulse ; minds previously depressed will then take fire from other minds ; and hope, and energy, and strong determination, are called forth, to an extent which would appear almost incredible to any one

who could have previously tested the feeling of each separate mind. It is true, that when such simultaneous impressions are made upon a mixed and only occasional audience, composed of strangers, who disperse, probably never to meet again, the moment after they have felt together thus strongly, the impression naturally dies away, or gives place to subsequent emotions ; but if the same company remained together, the case would be widely different ; the remembrance of what had been felt in common would remain distinct in every mind ; and those who had looked upon each, and felt each other's presence, during those moments of intense and thrilling interest, would feel a secret bond in that remembrance—a kind of tacit pledge one towards another, to maintain the same sentiments as then were shared in, and to act upon the same principles as were then commended to the approbation of all.

It is an encouraging fact, that young minds are especially alive to sympathies which bind to the side of what they believe, at the moment, to be good and great, just and kind ; and that such sympathies, enforced by the authority of Scripture truths, and Scripture language, produce impressions at once delightful, deep, and lasting. It is not, however, upon mere impression, or emotion, however valuable they may be as accessories, that any sure foundation can be laid. The understanding must be aroused, as well as the feelings excited ; and, for this reason, a direct process of moral teaching must be comprehended in the system of Moral Training, to render it complete. It is, surely, sufficiently evident, that, for this great object, both *time* and *means* must be afforded.

The principle of benevolence has already been alluded to, as highly important in producing, not only a close intimacy and right understanding between the parties holding authority, and those for whose benefit such authority is ex-

exercised ; but as producing—especially upon the minds of the young—the most beneficial moral influence. We have already described the operation of this principle upon the lowest classes of society, through the voluntary agency of those whose circumstances place them in a higher grade ; and this accessory to moral influence may easily be engaged on the right side, up to a certain rank or scale of society ; because the teachers, in our public schools for the people, are supposed to occupy a station at least equal to—but, in most cases, a few shades above—that of their pupils. We have not, however, to advance many degrees higher, before we begin to hear the most deserving persons spoken of, and that often by their inferiors in every thing but friends and money, as “ only schoolmasters,” and “ only governesses”—expressions which every one knows to be accompanied with degrees of a certain kind of feeling that requires no further description here.

In looking fairly at the subject in this light, we see but too plainly, that those who have the great and important duty of education resting upon them, are deprived, in the outset, by the influence of public feeling, of one great requisite for performing their part in the work of moral improvement ; for how can those children be made to believe that their teachers are exercising benevolence towards them, whose parents, by their conduct, or conversation, place the whole body of teachers in an inferior position, and even lead their children to think and speak as if it were a personal favor to allow any one in their situation to superintend their studies ? While teachers are thus treated by individuals, and thus placed by public feeling, their intellectual duties must always be sufficiently difficult to perform ; but to speak of their *moral influence* would, indeed, be a mockery of words.

All efforts, therefore—and, happily, there are some al-

ready working in the right direction—which tend to improve the qualifications, and elevate the position, of this class of the community, ought to be hailed as favorable omens, by those who are interested in the moral progress of society. It is true that little thought is now bestowed upon this branch of preparation for the duties of education ; but it is one step in education, to obtain the means of influence—the next is, to use that influence aright.

It is also an encouraging aspect of the times in which we live, that the subject of rewards and punishments is claiming so deep an interest in the public mind. Perhaps it would be more correct to speak of punishments alone in this sense, the operation of our penal code being chiefly made the subject of consideration ; and there is perhaps no topic to which public attention could be directed, involving truths of more serious import, and principles more important to the welfare of society, than this. We have too long been accustomed to look upon the infliction of certain punishments, affixed to certain transgressions of the law, as a kind of retributive justice rendered to society, forgetting that the same justice would demand the affixing of certain rewards, equally proportioned, to those efforts from which society derives an equal amount of good.

But, setting aside this idea of retributive justice, we are told that the punishments affixed by law to certain crimes, possess a twofold virtue—that of preserving society from a repetition of the same offences, and that of deterring others from following in the same fatal course. Without questioning the efficacy of the cure, in either of these cases, it is impossible to refrain from a comparison between them, and what might have been, in early life, the simple, natural, and scriptural means of prevention, had such unfortunate outcasts from the fellowship of man been trained, as children, in the ways of wisdom and of peace.

Is there any appeal which can yet be made to an enlightened public, to think of these things? They are worthy of the most serious—the most solemn thought. It is not the last act of the condemned criminal alone which has been an offence to God—an injury to man. He has poured upon society the poison of a whole sinful life; and because one single act has gone too far, he is to be launched into eternity, in all probability, without having ever reflected upon the end of his existence, or known the value of his own soul. But, besides these wretched victims of a violated law, there are thousands upon thousands whose dreary deathbeds form a picture scarcely less appalling than the public exhibition of the solitary criminal's last agony. Nor is it in the closing scene of life alone that characters like these are terrible to contemplate. As active agents in disseminating evil, they are still more fearful, passing to and fro upon the earth with their dark purposes, their seared foreheads, and their hardened hearts.

But let us turn away from thoughts and things so terrible. Each one of these, however corrupted and malignant now, had once a fresh bright infancy, comparatively guileless; born it might be to lowest degradation, nursed in the lap of vice, and taught to lisp in words of infamy—still, theirs was infancy and childhood comparatively spotless, and then, as capable of *good* impressions, as it was proved to be of *bad*. All it required at that stage of experience, was judicious training—the work which nature asks, and Christian benevolence can so well supply. Is it possible for an instant to suppose that any outward restraint in afterlife, however forcibly applied, and accompanied even with an array of justice, so important as to require the wisest, the wealthiest, and the noblest of the land to assist in executing judgment against the poorest and the most ignorant?—is it possible that any one can compare all this

with the small amount of good which it actually accomplishes, and that by no means radical in its cure, and not feel convinced, that the great business we have now to undertake, as earnest workers in a working world, is to apply our zealous efforts to the great duty of Prevention, trusting that, with a blessing on our labors, there will be less necessity for a Cure ?

THE END.

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
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
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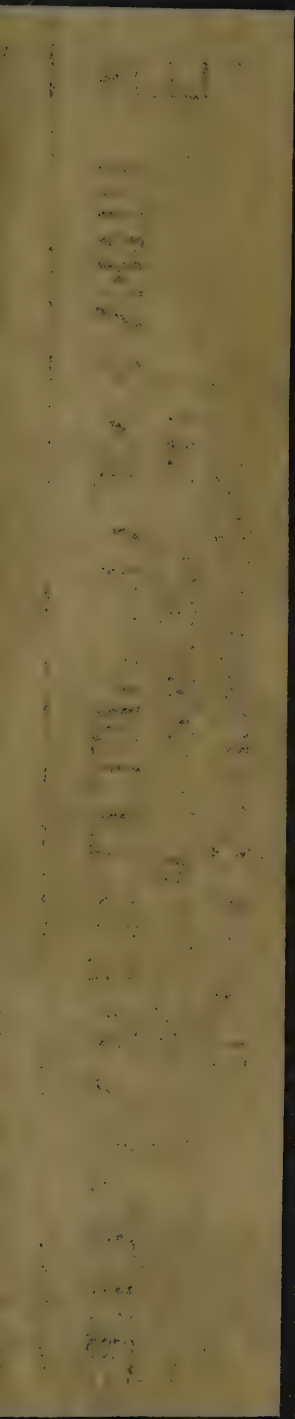
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